

DOCTORAL THESIS

“To make books of nothing”

Brutan drama in early modern England

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**“To Make Books of Nothing”:
Brutan Drama in Early Modern England**

by

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for the degree of PhD**

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Abstract

Early modern drama representing the Brutian histories is highly diverse in terms of genre, tone, and date. However, this thesis argues that these texts and performances can be collectively addressed through a clearer understanding of their shared origins in the traditional account of Britain's pre-Christian history, an account that operated as a dynamic force throughout English society from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries. Traditionally termed "Galfridian" by critics after its origin in the *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1135) by Geoffrey of Monmouth, this thesis argues that this account of British etiology be re-classified "Brutian" to reflect its transmission via anonymous medieval manuscript chronicles known as Bruts, themselves named for Britain's putative founder, the Trojan exile Brute. In the early modern era, however, this foundational narrative was proved by historiographers to be a twelfth-century invention. This development triggered decades of dispute, doubt, and patriotic resistance, a process I term etiological erosion.

This thesis asks what it might have meant to encounter drama representing Brutian figures during their slow cultural transformation from national founders to abandoned fictions. In terms of reception, this drama could both reinforce and destabilise perceptions of Brutian historicity. Chapter One establishes the social pervasiveness of the Brutian tradition from the medieval to the early modern periods, providing context for the representation of Brutian ancestry before Elizabeth I in *Gorboduc* (1562); Chapter Two argues that, even as the performance of Brutian figures was used to represent national and civic founding in pageants performed before Henry VII (1486), and the plays *Lochrine* (c. 1590) and *King Lude* (1594), these figures also raised troubling iconographic associations with the Near East and civic destruction; Chapter Three argues that the propagandistic re-energisation of the Brutian histories in the early Jacobean era paradoxically foregrounded their instability, a tension perceptible in plays such as *King Lear* (c. 1606); the final chapter explores the aftermath of Brutian belief via texts including *Cymbeline* (c. 1610) and, finally, Milton's *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634).

This thesis, then, argues that whilst Brutian drama can be addressed according to its social, commercial, and political functions, a fuller picture emerges when this century-and-a-half of cultural utility is understood as the product of a four-hundred-year tradition of national origins that was being gradually yet irrevocably eroded.

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I note with some embarrassment that this study, which focuses on a seemingly endless parade of largely joyless, patriarchal, often misogynistic, and entirely fictional kings, would not have been possible without the expertise, wisdom, and guidance of so many brilliant women. To Jane and Clare, of course. To Sara Lodge, for early encouragement. Most especially to my partner, Maeve Rutten, without whom this work wouldn't exist, and, if it did, it wouldn't matter: the cause, companion, and destination of the adventure. In *The Art of English Poesie* (1579), George Puttenham tells his readers that one of the purposes and pleasures of studying history is that men might become ennobled by studying the "liuely image of our deare forefathers, their noble and vertuous maner of life". I am fortunate, and needn't look so far back. I look instead to my mother, Anna Gilchrist, from whom I've learned more than I could from a chronicle's worth of forefathers, and to whom this thesis is dedicated.

Introduction

The dissolution of created things is but a resolution of one thing into another.

Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia* (1615; f. 198).

How historical reality is constructed ... depends not only on the form or genre in which it is represented, but also on the social realities that define the world of the individual reader or listener in the present.

Daniel Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past* (2003; 325).

This thesis explores the performance of Brutan history in early modern England. Textual accounts of British antiquity were transmitted into the early modern period via a medieval tradition of manuscript histories known collectively as the prose *Brut*, so-named for its chronicle narrative presenting the founding and naming of Britain by Brute, a descendant of the Trojan Aeneas, in the eleventh century before Christ. I will focus on the performance and dramatic texts of narratives drawn from these histories, which I term “Brutan”. The above quotation from Daniel Woolf provides, in many ways, my primary methodological approach to ideas of the lived past and their expression in a given historical moment. The particular “form and genre” in question are the many manifestations of early modern drama both in performance and print; the perceived “historical reality” to which this drama responds and which it also constructs is that of ancient, pre-Roman and, in the case of *Cymbeline*, simultaneously Roman and Brutan, Britain. These elements will be contextualised via attentiveness to the “world” of early modern readers and audiences. This thesis, then, is an exploration of the dramatisation of an era of ancient British history that, as will be shown fully in

Chapter One, was neither “ancient,” “British,” nor “history”. It was, to cite the quotation from Helkiah Crooke at the beginning of this introduction, a “created thing”. I argue that the dramatisation of the Brutus histories, and the reception of that drama in performance and print, was first shaped by those histories’ rhetorical usefulness at moments of national and regional transformation, often between the English monarch and civic institutions. Subsequently, however, this dramatisation and its reception was transformed by the gradual discovery of the underlying fictiveness of Brutus history that occurred during the early modern period.

This introduction addresses a number of questions and issues. First, a brief survey of the historiographic background to the Brutus histories provides context for the dramatic texts and performances I will explore. This study raises several questions relating to the terminology often used to address the materials under investigation: terms such as “history,” “British,” and “myth”. As such, I will unpack and complicate these in order to highlight particular epistemological problems, and to foreground a sense of early modern historical dissonance that is central to my investigation. I draw upon Woolf’s work to argue for approaching the dramatisation of events believed to have occurred in lived time, or “performed history,” not only as a dramatic genre but also as a species of popular historiography. I then collate the texts and performances to be explored, at the same time resisting the notion of a “canon” of Brutus drama by highlighting how each work is shaped and characterised by its dramaturgical and cultural moment. The corpus established, I will outline my methodological approach and present my key research questions via synopses of each of the thesis’s chapters.

The Brutus histories were both a series of narratives connecting British origins to post-diluvian antiquity via the island’s conquest by Trojan Brute, and a twelfth-

century invention by the Oxford-based lay cleric Geoffrey of Monmouth in his incalculably influential *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1135).¹ By the early modern period, these opposing conceptions of the past were in conflict. On the one hand, Geoffrey's narratives dominated as a habit of thought deeply embedded at all levels of English culture, sustained through the anonymous medieval manuscript Brut chronicles and their early modern print analogues, elite genealogy, civic history, romance, *de casibus* literature, and oral tradition. On the other hand, a growing number of sceptical historiographers and writers were uncovering this tradition's fictive and relatively recent origins. From the mid-sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries, this view slowly gained traction in scholarly and specialist circles whilst other communities – lawyers and livery companies for example – seem to have remained indignant and resistant. Eventually and unevenly, however, Brute and the generations of rulers that were said to have followed him up to the Roman era became accepted as mythic before disappearing from cultural usage altogether. Andrew Escobedo's term for the early modern perception of the lack of documentary evidence concerning British antiquity is "historical loss"; however, to foreground a sense of these vanishing origins *in motion*, I have renamed this process "etiological erosion". The tradition based on Geoffrey's *Historia*, however, raises particular epistemological issues. Much myth, such as the ancient Greek traditions of narrative explored by Paul Veyne, could parse spurious accounts of ancient times as echoes of past events made fabulous over centuries of retelling, and therefore accommodate them into a vision of the lived ancestral past. Conversely, the tradition inaugurated by Geoffrey of Monmouth was of relatively recent pedigree and traceable to a single author; it could

¹ The adoption of members of the Trojan diaspora in order to establish origins was not unusual for Europe's "newly emergent nations" seeking "classical glory" (Weijer 45).

not be “myth” if it was manifestly fictive, its creation postdating the era it claimed to recover.

Throughout the early modern period, narratives lifted from these histories were represented in drama, appropriated for civic and royal pageantry, and reproduced as playbooks and other textual records of performance. By 1612, Thomas Heywood in his *Apology for Actors* could write that plays had “taught the vnlearned the knowledge of many famous histories,” particularly “the discouery of all our English Chronicles ... euen from William the Conquerour, nay from the landing of Brute, vntill this day” (sig. F3r), suggesting that the millennia of historical time covered by the “English Chronicles” had been comprehensively mapped and reproduced in playhouse drama, from such landmark texts as *Gorboduc* (1562), the first verse tragedy written in English, to Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* (c. 1611). These plays’ relationship with their chronicle roots has been explored only in brief studies, often in relation to *King Lear* (c. 1606; pub. 1608) and *Cymbeline* and grouped amongst other literary responses on the part of English writers to questions of “Britain” and “Britishness” in the years following the accession of the Scottish king James VI to the English throne in 1603.² However, this thesis endeavours to provide

² Examples of this include: in relation to or mentioning *King Lear*, Draper (1937); Dutton (1986); Marcus, *Puzzling* (1988); Patterson, *Shakespeare*, 106-09 (1989); Farley-Hills (1990); Halpern (1991); Foakes, “Introduction” (1997); Marshall, *Theatre* (2000); Clegg (2008); Schwyzer, “Jacobean” (2008); Hill, “Representing” (2008); Manley, *Literature* (2011); and de Grazia, “Albion” (2013). Works including *Cymbeline* in relation to Jacobean policy and/or wider issues of “British” identities include Jones, “Stuart” (1961); Yates (1975); Bergeron (1980); Parker (1989); Mikalachki (1995); Curran, “Royalty” (1997); James (1997); Maley (1999); Crumley (2001); Innes (2007); McMullan, “Colonisation” (2007); Escobedo, “Britannia” (2008); Kerrigan, *Archipalagic* (2008), Cull (2010); Hopkins, “*Cymbeline*” (2010); Patterson, *James VI* (2011); and Wayne, *Cymbeline* (2017).

the first comprehensive study of Brutan history as represented in textual records of performance, and it does so via the historiographic drift outlined above: these texts, events, and performances were paid for, witnessed, and read by audiences whose understanding of their national origins was undergoing a process of long-term and deepening doubt and dissonance. In approaching a study of ancient British history that was also, as I have noted, none of these things, these key terms should be re-examined, beginning with those terms for which, I suggest, “Brutan” offers a productive replacement.

When addressing representations and accounts of pre-Christian and pre-Roman Britain traceable to, but independent of, Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia*, I will adopt the term “Brutan histories”.³ This has several applications and aims to address and incorporate two problematic critical terms: “Galfridian,” denoting Geoffrey of Monmouth, and “The British History”. The words Brutan, and “Brutaine,” amongst many spelling variants, were used to describe Britain and the British – usually, if not always, considered by the English as synonymous with England and the English – throughout the medieval and early modern eras. For example, John Stow mentions in his *The Chronicles of England from Brute vnto this Present Yeare of Christ* (1580) that “some Englishe writers aboue an hundred yeares

³ The phrase “Brutan Histories” is used only once in early modern print, in Harvey’s *Philadelphus*, wherein Harvey complains of “outlandish intruders” attempting to “vsurpe the censure of the Brutan Histories” (sig. C3r).

since, vsually doe name [the British Isles] *Brutan*” (f. 18).⁴ Thus, “Brutan histories” creates an etymological connection between these narratives and early modern conceptualisations of the British Isles, their ancient inhabitants, and their founder. In contrast, the term “Galfridian” semantically localises five centuries of textual history to a single author and historical moment.

In the prologue to the *Historia*, Geoffrey of Monmouth noted that he had found nothing in previous works touching on “the kings who lived here before Christ’s incarnation” (4). His book addressed this omission with reference to a “certain old book,” or *liber vetustissimus*, written in an ancient British language and subsequently translated into Latin by Geoffrey himself (4). This “old book” was, as some early modern writers suspected and modern critics almost universally agree, an enabling fiction allowing Geoffrey to concoct his pre-Roman history of Britain almost completely *ex nihilo*.⁵ Geoffrey’s extraordinary invention, the *Historia*, was to enjoy an influence and success beyond almost any other medieval text. As such, it might seem natural that the term adopted by many critics for figures and narratives derived from the *Historia* is “Galfridian,” indicating an origin from a single author and text. I argue, however, that the use of the term occludes the ways in which, almost from the publication of the *Historia* itself, Geoffrey’s narratives escaped into vernacular and non-literate cultures through dissemination via verse retellings by Wace (c. 1150) and

⁴ The word “Briton,” however, whilst used to denote Britain’s ancient inhabitants, was also often used to refer to the Welsh, who were believed to be the most direct descendents of Brut and his Trojans. As Stow also reported, Wales had become the ancient Britons’ refuge after “so many of the Brytaines as remayned aliue after the slaughter and losse of their countrey” at the hands of the Saxons were driven west where “partly through refuge of the mountaines, and partly of the wooddes and marishes, they remained in safetie” (*Chronicles*, f. 10).

⁵ The term *ex nihilo* has been applied to Geoffrey’s creation of the *Historia* by several critics, including Pace 54; and Davies 4.

Lazamon⁶ and the anonymous and multi-authored prose *Brut* tradition. As Tamar Drukker notes, citing the *Middle English Dictionary*, a “Brut” is “any of the chronicles of British history beginning with Brute” (“Thirty-Three” 451). These texts altered the *Historia*’s narrative in ways large and small and, over the centuries, their unknown compilers added more and more additional material. Resisting the term “Galfridian” allows for terminology that accommodates the *Historia*’s complex, centuries-long transmission and mutation. Significantly for early modern dramatists and their sources, Bruts often provided substantive material for chronicle and historiographic texts printed in the early modern period, beginning with William Caxton’s *Cronicles of Englond* (1480). Whilst Geoffrey of Monmouth was cited in many of these texts, the *Historia* itself was never published in English or in England in the early modern period. Thus, the term “Brutan histories” prioritises the role of the *Brut* tradition, and Britain’s Trojan founder; it accommodates the accumulation of narrative additions and variations and addresses the fact that most early moderns encountering these narratives would not have done so via the *Historia* itself. The term “Galfridian,” on the other hand, presents a monolithic sense of a single author and his text which is, I think, unrepresentative of the prose *Brut*’s essential anonymity and multiple variants. Also, whilst “Galfridian” might be taken to indicate a focus on any narrative, including Arthurian, derived from the *Historia*, in adopting “Brutan histories” I hope to shift the emphasis towards Brute, and British etiology, or origins, for which there were no substantive accounts alternative to the *Historia*. In contrast, narrative episodes from Roman and post-Roman periods in the *Historia*’s time scheme see their fictiveness embedded within more verifiable Roman and Saxon

⁶ Lazamon cannot be dated accurately, but at the latest originates in the mid-to-late thirteenth century (Bzdył 10).

accounts, the wider historicity of which a medieval or early modern reader might address with reference to alternative sources. Finally, rather than looking back to a single author and, by inference, a singular monolithic narrative and locus of authorial intent and effect, the term “Brutan histories” seeks to interconnect the disparate texts – manuscript and print, chronicle and poem, ballad and play – that created a vast network of accounts of Britain’s ancient origins. The use of the plural “histories” also highlights the polyvocal, intertextual nature of this tradition, resonant with the contradictions, discourses and paradoxes to be found both within and between these texts.

“Brutan histories” also engages with another phrase still often adopted by critics, “the British History”. This phrase raises questions of what – now, and in the early modern period – might securely be defined as “British” or “Britain”. In 1950, Thomas Kendrick could adopt the phrase “in accordance with ... custom,” indicating its antiquated status (6).⁷ Critics’ failure to reflect upon the usage of this term, however, long prevented alertness to the complex issues raised by the word “British”. The phrase’s uses and function were refreshed when, in the 1970s, John Pocock made an influential call for a new “British history”; that is, for new methodologies that both challenged the Anglo-centric nature of historiographic approaches to the region Pocock termed the “Atlantic archipelago” (“British History” 603), and which recognised the complex interrelationships and mutual influence, as well as periods of separate development, within and between the territories familiarly known as England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. Much subsequent historical scholarship

⁷ More recently, the term has been adopted for the title of John Curran’s 2002 work, *Roman Invasions: The British History, Protestant Anti-Romanism, and the Historical Imagination in England, 1530-1660*.

responding to Pocock's call has, productively, also questioned these categories, arguing that a history addressing England and Scotland, to cite just one example, might just as usefully be configured as the interactions between the upland and lowland regions of Britain's largest island (Cannadine 25).⁸ Underlying much of this criticism are the complex and ideological inflections of attempts to define questions of "Britishness" in the early modern era. This in turn has produced much literary criticism focussing on the distinct and dissonant representations of British territories and regional cultures in early modern literature.⁹ For example, Andrew Hadfield has argued that, "whilst Ireland and Wales appeared to contemporaries to have been united by their different experiences of invasion and colonisation, English intellectuals saw their nation in danger of dissolving" (*Shakespeare* 138). Hadfield identifies in the works of Edmund Spenser, Shakespeare, and Michael Drayton an equivocal approach to the notion of Britishness in terms of both its antiquity and early modern political coherence. The perception of, and resistance to, etiological erosion with which I am principally concerned, runs concurrent with these "British" cultural anxieties and frequently interacts with them.

Alan MacColl, detailing the various politically and regionally inflected uses of the terms "Britain" and "British" in the medieval to early modern periods notes that texts such as the prose *Brut* "either do not refer to 'Britain' at all or use it as a synonym for England" (257). It is important to adhere to MacColl's advice that, when

⁸ The response to Pocock was gradual but eventually became wide ranging. Significant works include: Pocock, "British History," and "Limits and Divisions"; Bourke; Bradshaw and Morrill; Bradshaw and Roberts; Burgess; Cannadine; Ellis and Barber; Grant and Stringer; Hutton; Kearney; Morrill "Fashioning," and "The British Problem"; Russell.

⁹ Some examples of this which are pertinent to my own thesis include: Escobedo, *Historical Loss*; Hadfield, *Shakespeare*; Helgerson; Kerrigan; Kumar; and McEachern.

encountering these terms in early modern usage, “we need to pause and ask who is using them, when, and for what purpose” (269). For example, the entertainments at Henry VIII and Charles V’s 1522 entry into London included a “pageaunte off [i.e. of] an ylonde betokening the Ile off [i.e. named] englonde compassed all abowte wt water made in silver” (Kipling 161; Withington 1.177). This might be cited as one amongst many examples of one party or another – usually the English – exploiting as useful the blurredness between the two terms. In this example, a physical representation of the single landmass comprising England, Scotland and Wales is presented in an English entertainment as representing the isle of England alone. That is, if one term may serve as a synecdoche for several, particularly in the context of a material representation of the whole “Ile,” those subsumed with England into the central British landmass, Scotland and Wales in this case, are arguably rendered semantically subordinate. Ireland, as far as it is possible to tell from the evidence, was not included as part of the representation. In short, I suggest “the British History” is far too entangled within the vagaries of early modern usage, outmoded critical tradition *and* recent progressive critical discourse to sustain independent meaning as a term for the fictionalised period of antiquity with which I am concerned.

As such, for the purposes of a thesis focussing on the fictive origins of the ancient British, the term “Brutan histories” is also useful as it is suggestive of the literary nature of the tradition and its personification in the figures of Brute and his descendants. Therefore, I will, unless otherwise stated, confine my usage of the word “British” to texts and literary-historical figures relating to or situated within the period of the British Isles’ putative antiquity, gesturing back to an ancient era of perceived archipelagic coherence as established by Brute’s conquest and made use of in many of the playtexts and performances I will examine. John Kerrigan, in examining problems

relating to the word “British,” observes that it “tends to imply if not the existence then the inevitability of a state that was only just, unevenly, forming in the seventeenth century” (23). The ancient Britain of the Brutus histories, however, whilst separated into territories and often threatened by internal division and invasion, was broadly imagined as precisely this: a once-integrated, single kingdom of “Britain” which, in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s words, “the Britons [i.e. inhabitants of ancient Britain] once occupied ... from shore to shore” (Reeve and Wright 8). This might suggest that the usage of “British History” before Pocock would serve as the term for narratives relating the British Isles’ antiquity. However, I suggest that “Brutus” more clearly reflects that narrative’s archaism, both today and in the early modern period, when both historiographic texts and many of the performance texts I examine engaged with “Britain” as an emblem of lost etiological unity; hence the perceived tragedy of its periodic fragmentation as performed in *Gorboduc* and *King Lear*, albeit from the perspective of English and more specifically London-centric dramatists, stationers, audiences, and readers. This narrative of fragmentation also prompted the adoption of “British” founding figures in celebrating a notional Jacobean reunification in Anthony Munday’s Lord Mayor’s show *Triumphs of Reunited Britannia* (1605; pub. 1605), which positions James VI and I as a “new Brute” reuniting a tragically divided ancient kingdom. The use of a less familiar term also serves as a reminder that, even for early moderns, these histories were troublingly ancient, and that their character and course were shaped by a founding individual. This focus on personified etymology is also significant in the context of performance. In *Lochrine* (c. 1590; pub. 1595), for example, Brute and his sons may be said to stand in for the regions and topography to which they gave their names.

Another issue raised by the notion of a singular “British History,” is that it assigns a secure meaning to the word “history” that is unreflective of early modern usage. In the medieval and early modern periods, the word “history” was semantically insecure, suggesting anything from past events to any form of narrative, fictional or otherwise. Woolf has explored the varied and contradictory uses of the word, noting that, whilst the term had been “problematic and fluid,” it gradually became used more often “to distinguish between history proper, a truthful account of real events, and poetry or fable, the account of the verisimilar or fabulous” (“Erudition” 19). Whilst accepting that usage did standardise, further difficulty is apparent when considering the word as it was used to categorise those texts purporting to address the past, rather than the truth value of the material those texts contained. Thus, a “history” might be a classical work or a humanist work composed on classical principles. A “chronicle,” meanwhile, was likely to follow medieval forms, manifesting as verse narratives, chronological synopses of reigns and events, or longer works offering multiple versions of contested narratives. Thus, when referring to any of the forms of “chronicle,” “history,” or other texts that also address narratives of the past but which resist secure categorisation, I will adopt the term “historiographic text/s”. Writers, also, were not securely generic. An individual could produce works in many fields, making the term “historian” misleading. Historiographic texts were used as sources by writers of poetry, political and religious texts, and plays. Many of these individuals also produced historiographic texts of their own. As such, rather than defining each author with a reductive “job title,” such as “the poet Samuel Daniel,” or “the historian John Speed,” I will situate each author within the multiple and intersecting professional and textual functions that are typical of early modern literary practice. Finally, in my own use of the term “history,” when referring to early modern thought

or texts relating to events and individuals believed to have existed, I will use the words “history” and “historical” in their familiar contemporary forms – that is, to indicate actual or received historicity.

This is not to suggest that early modern thought could not accommodate or utilise material with uncertain or insecure truth value. George Puttenham’s *Art of English Poesie* (1589), for example, supported the tradition of the “poesie historical,” poetic treatments of figures and events believed to be historical, often for didactic purposes. This term was defined by Puttenham as the poetic means by which readers might “behold as it were in a glasse the liuely image of our deare forefathers, their noble and vertuous maner of life” (f. 31). Poesie historical created a zone wherein a degree of flexibility was acceptable in addressing such material, as well as in creatively reworking accepted historical accounts for didactic purposes. The moral “truth” and exemplary function of these narratives was valued above their putative historicity. Puttenham’s characterisation of the authors of poesie historical makes this clear:

These historical men neuerthelesse vsed not the matter so precisely to wish that al they wrote should be accounted true, for that was not needefull nor expedient to the purpose, namely to be vsed either for example or for pleasure: considering that many times it is seene a fained matter or altogether fabulous ... works no lesse good conclusions for example then the most true and veritable. (f. 32).

Even if a poet’s treatment of events or figures from lived history included alterations to the effect that not all should be “accounted true,” this was besides the point, which

was to provide “conclusions for example”. That is, models and lessons by which to order and determine personal and political conduct; this is the function of, for example, *A Mirror for Magistrates* (1559).¹⁰ The logic of poeie historical allowed material that was spurious on both theological and historiographic grounds, such as the classical myths, or on purely historiographic grounds, such as the Brutan histories, to sustain an influence even where their verity was distrusted. As such, a binary model of those who “believed” or “disbelieved” the Brutan histories is insufficient to encompass the fluidity, doubt, and semi-belief both accommodated by poeie historical and triggered by the period’s historiographic shifts.

Addressing the complex territories between belief and doubt, Veyne finds evidence for “modalities of wavering belief,” marked by a “capacity to simultaneously believe in incompatible truths” in ancient Greek attitudes to their religious and historiographic narratives (56). Arthur Ferguson argues that Veyne’s theories are applicable to early modern attitudes to the remote past (2). Adopting Veyne’s fluid “modalities,” accommodates attitudes to the Brutan histories that occupied a dissonant state between a will to believe and discomfiting doubt once the “crisis of belief” in their historicity (Ferguson 26) was encountered. These modalities might be imagined as occurring across a spectrum running from apparent certainty in the historicity of the Brutan histories to their outright rejection; also, paradoxically, we might detect undercurrents of doubt in the most vociferous endorsements, such as Richard Harvey’s manically faithful *Philadelphus* (1593), or traces of nostalgia or

¹⁰ *A Mirror for Magistrates* was first published in 1559, with contributions from William Baldwin and others. Supplementary and amended editions were published frequently afterwards, including John Higgins’s *First Parte* in 1574, which addressed the lives of Britain’s Brutan dynasties.

regret in writers such as William Camden and John Speed whose work contributed so much to the process of etiological erosion through their tacit acceptance, prompted by a humanist favouring of classical over English historiographic sources, that the Brutian histories were indeed an invention.

Therefore, utilising the potential effects of historiographic texts on the belief-status of early modern readers and playgoers is problematic. Attendance to Veyne's modalities as a model of historical dissonance will, to a degree, address such concerns. Today, such dissonant material – that which serves and feeds the story a culture tells about itself – might be termed “myth,” and thus accommodated within Veyne's modalities. Indeed, “myth” is a term almost universally adopted by critics engaging with Brutian history and drama.¹¹ This is understandable, and the correct critical term for a fiction that is believed and culturally utilised, as the Brutian histories were throughout the medieval and much of the early modern periods. However, I suggest that “myth,” whilst applicable to the latter phases or modes of the Brutian histories' reception, fails to accommodate their eventual condition of cultural abandonment.

In *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes defines myth as “*a type of speech ... a message ... a mode of signification, a form*” (109); that is, something that must be expressed, given, received, and used. Myth, Barthes seems to suggest, in order to *be* myth, must be active and exchanged, characterised by a certain usefulness, mobility, and status in oral culture. The mid-Jacobean period saw an intensification of the

¹¹Examples include Hardin, who refers to the “mythology of ‘Britain’,” (235); Teramura's reference to “Britain's deep mythical prehistory and its earliest legendary rulers” (129); and Knapp's “mythical story of Brute” (199). Almost any critic, however, could be cited as having used similar terminology.

process by which the Brutus histories became elided from English and wider British culture. In Barthes's terms, the Brutus "type of speech," whether historiographic or poetic, gradually ceased to be, both figuratively and actually, spoken. It thus arguably ceased to be myth and entered an uncertain category of dead texts, or to repurpose a phrase from Richard Harvey, "books of nothing" (sig. H3r). The Brutus histories survived materially as manuscripts, printed volumes, and other physical documents but had largely been silenced in terms of the wider culture, speech, and reception. This study explores the early modern performance of Brutus narratives as participating in and at times reflecting their sources' transformation from "history," via "myth," into such "books of nothing".

In order for its cultural resonance to be more fully understood, Brutus drama must be situated within the historiographic traditions outlined above and those traditions' cultural operation in the moment of performance or publication. If a performance's rootedness in a received notion of the lived reality of the past is determined, as Woolf has it, by the "social realities that define the world of the individual reader or listener in the present," then almost any early modern play might be taken by someone, somewhere, as a version of something that had once happened. Yet discrimination between fact and fiction was exercised by audiences and readers, albeit according to wildly differing standards of proof. Writing of the playhouses in his *Survey of London* (1598), John Stow noted that the buildings were used to perform "Comedies, Tragedies, enterludes, and histories, both true and fayned" (f. 69). By suggesting that these genres could be divided into the true and the fictional, or at least as containing combinations of the two – an audience can accept the core historicity of Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*, for example, whilst acknowledging Falstaff's fictiveness – Stow indicates that there was an understanding that some narratives were

based on past events whilst others were not, or only pretended to be so. In order to account for theatre audiences' reception and understanding of performances purporting to represent the lived past, Benjamin Griffin focuses on the "plays, ballads, and pamphlets" that "formed, for the illiterate and the learned alike, a segmented but continuous patchwork History-of-England in the mind" (Griffin 76). However, Griffin also chooses to exclude the principal sources for many of these performances, the texts, both elite and popular, that he characterises as "the gorbellied chronicles of the Elizabethans" (xii). Griffin argues that "the plays' historical audiences, as a class, will mostly not have known the chronicles" (xii). I disagree with Griffin regarding both the critical usefulness and early modern accessibility of chronicle material. The exclusion of these texts occludes the ways in which different sections of an audience might experience performed history in very different ways. Historiographic texts were often the source of the popular traditions Griffin productively foregrounds, and John Stow's *Summarie of Englyshe Cronicles* (1565), for example, was a bestseller positioned just above the middle range of the book market in terms of its probable cost and therefore had the potential to reach a wide readership.¹² Also, popular forms

¹² To assess what constitutes a "bestseller," Andy Kesson and Emma Smith utilise Ian Green's criterion for establishing the popularity of religious texts in the period (*Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* 173). This asserts that "five editions over a 30-year period signals a significant intervention into the print market" (Kesson and Smith 9). Stow's *Summarie* received fifteen editions from 1565 to 1598 (*ESTC*). Many of these were updated and amended by Stow, and further editions appeared in the seventeenth century, amended by others after Stow's death. The *Summarie* was concurrently published in the small octavo format and, in an abridged version, in the even smaller (and thus cheaper) sextodecimo format, suggesting that the book's stationers were aiming for an economically diverse range of readers. Alan Farmer and Zachary Lesser note that a playbook was a "middling-cost" property, requiring nine-and-a-half sheets of paper - slightly lower than the median number of ten-and-a-half sheets needed for other books falling within this range (24-25). At 440 pages, the 1566 sextidecimo *Summarie* would have used approximately 14 sheets of paper, arguably placing it close to Farmer and Lesser's "middling" range of affordability.

shared with early modern historiographic texts an origin in the tradition of medieval manuscripts such as the prose *Brut*, which had escaped their textual origins into both the forms that Griffin favours, and those he excludes. One of this thesis's arguments is that the reception of Brutan drama by particular social groups was deeply influenced by the texts and historiographic traditions with which those groups identified and to which they had access. To watch *King Lear* as a lawyer or as a merchant tailor's apprentice may have been to witness a performance of history through very different historiographic lenses. To exclude the "gorbellied chronicles" from consideration both underestimates the accessibility of some texts, such as Stow's, and neglects the ways in which access to elite texts such as Holinshed's *Chronicles* might influence historical consciousness. Both as sources for performance and as a shaping effect on the reception of performance, all forms of historiographic texts can be seen as integral to performed history. As such, I will anchor this study's approach to the performance of history as a *genre* in close relationship with both written historiographic materials and popular forms. Thus, this thesis will also engage with as wide a range of evidence as possible. Whether the audiences knew the chronicles or not, the playmakers certainly did: texts such as Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577) had a huge shaping effect on the material presented to audiences, as evidenced most famously by Shakespeare's frequent recourse to *Chronicles* for his plays on English medieval history.

However, this raises the question of what the performances and texts considered in this thesis should be called. I suggest that the familiar term "history play" is insufficient. The term "history play" semantically excludes productions such as royal entries, court masques, and civic pageantry, which are central to this study. Additionally, in critical practice the term tends to work from a definition of the history play that is highly dependent upon Shakespeare's English "histories" as

sequenced and defined by their appearance in the 1623 folio of his dramatic works (F1) (Lidster 19). This has established a model of the form's generic characteristics against which other works are compared in order to be categorised (19). Amy Lidster has compiled a chart of some 255 playbooks containing material that could be considered "historical" (including reprints), published between 1584 and 1642 (298-324). The effect of Lidster's work is to demonstrate the extent to which the term "history play" has come to exclude the majority of early modern dramatic texts purporting to represent the lived past. This includes works that manifestly claim to represent events accepted by their audiences as historical, such as "foreign history, biblical history, classical history, and citizen-orientated history" (20); it also routinely excludes plays of pre-medieval English and British history, most notably Brutus drama.

In addition, the performance of history was not restricted to plays, just as the reading of history was not necessarily a silent, private act. "Performed history" was, I suggest, a species of historiography that was as intertwined with chronicles as it was with ballads and pamphlets. It was also one of the most widely experienced versions of history available, being the "genre that appealed to perhaps the broadest cross-section of Elizabethan society" (Woolf, "Decline," 348): for many, especially those without recourse to alternative sources, publicly performed history *was* history. This diversity extends beyond textual genres and into genres of performance, as will be shown in the wide range of materials addressed in my dramatic corpus. For this reason, I favour the term "performed history" over the more familiar "history play".

This generic interplay is supported by ideas of historical consciousness developed by Woolf across a body of work that in part argues for a greater porousness between verbal and literate transmission of historiographic texts, as well as the

importance of non-elite and oral traditions in the creation of a wider sense of a culture's "historical mental map" ('Hystories,' 39). Woolf notes the "frequency of metaphors of sound rather than sight in Renaissance texts," suggesting that writers "thought of their works not as silent artefacts" but as texts with the potential to be spoken aloud ("Speech" 159-160). The early modern interaction with historiographic texts was then, in part, performative: Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton have influentially argued that the reading of history "was normally carried out in the company of a colleague or student; and was a public performance, rather than a private meditation," that is, the writers of historiographic texts perceived of their readers as auditors, and readers in turn would have read the text aloud to one or more listeners or participants (31). The cumulative effect of this work is to construct an early modern historical consciousness in which the reception of historiographic texts could be performative and theatrical performance could be received as a form of historiographic text. The notion that performed history was inseparable from the wider historical consciousness of early modern England, whether determined by popular ballad or elite historiography, is integral to each stage of the present study. Within this tradition of performed history, however, the Brutian histories' underlying fictiveness poses a unique set of problems. These are outlined in the following section, which also establishes the parameters of the theatrical corpus I will investigate.

Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* extended from the life of Brute, whom Stow stated had conquered Albion in the year 1108 BCE (*Summarie*, f. 9), to that of the

seventh-century Cadwallader, the “last king of Britayne” (f. 36r).¹³ However, as noted, it is only in the years preceding the Roman histories’ accounts of invading Britain (c. 52 BCE) that Geoffrey was able to be almost entirely self-reliant. Historical evidence became gradually more prevalent following the Roman histories and Geoffrey was able to interweave his fabrications with verifiable accounts of Anglo Saxon history by writers such as Bede. The most famous of Geoffrey’s interpolations into this era were the stories of King Arthur and Merlin, and these were often the focus of attacks on the *Historia*’s accuracy, by authors such as Polydore Vergil (*Anglica Historia*; Basel, 1534), or defences of Arthur’s historicity such as John Leland’s *Assertio Inclytissimi Arturii Regis Britannia* (1544). Performances, pageants, and plays featuring Arthur, Merlin, and associated figures, often focusing on the first wave of Saxon invasions, were performed throughout the early modern era. These include *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, by Thomas Hughes and others (1588), and

¹³ Many historiographic texts differed on how to calculate the precise date of Brute’s conquest. The 1577 edition of Holinshed’s *Chronicles* gives the year 1116 BCE (f. 15). Doubts over accurate dating only fuelled the era’s historical dissonance.

Middelton and Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin* (perf. c. 1625; pub. 1662).¹⁴ Similarly, a sequence of Jacobean plays on early Roman Britain can be shown to have their sources in non-Brutan, and therefore more historically secure, historiographic material.¹⁵ The pre-Roman era, however, was a blank.

I am particularly engaged here not only with accounts of individual kings, queens, and other characters, but with the macro-fiction that contained them, the notional expanse of time that Geoffrey created in which to locate his epic, classicised vision of British origins: whilst King Arthur could be removed from the historical account without existential damage to the wider historical period in which he was said to have lived, the pre-Roman period as presented in the *Historia* could survive only,

¹⁴ Works addressing early modern Arthurian drama include those by Elisabeth Michelsson and Whitfield White. The most comprehensive is Michelsson's *Appropriating King Arthur* (1999), which engages with the question of "how and by whom King Arthur was appropriated as a theme in English dramatic entertainments" (17). In adopting a chronological approach to performances between 1485 to 1625, the structure and date-range of Michelsson's study is similar to my own. Plays treating the Saxon invasions, specifically Thomas Middleton's *Hengist, King of Kent* (c. 1615-20; pub. 1661), are addressed in McMullan ("Colonisation"); and Briggs ("Forgotten," and "New Times"). Briggs argues that *Hengist* "draws an explicit analogy" between Hengist's early British Christians and the early modern Protestant English via the latter's struggle against the pagan Saxons ("Forgotten" 491). In this way, pre-Roman, pagan, Brutan history might be seen as a more problematic, and less enticing territory for dramatising Protestant polemic.

¹⁵ For example, John Fletcher's *Bonduca* (c. 1611-14; pub. 1647) draws upon the life of the Icenic queen Boudica, a securely historical figure whose wars with the Romans were recorded by Tacitus and, therefore, not available to English historiographers in Geoffrey of Monmouth's time (Curran, *Roman* 181). R.A.'s *The Valiant Welshman* (c. 1610-15; pub. 1615) draws upon Tacitus (Curran, *Roman* 190; 198-200) and possibly the Scottish chronicles of Hector Boece. Floyd-Wilson, discussing *Cymbeline*'s Arviragus and Guiderius, notes moments where Boece and Holinshed differ and which may be applicable to *The Valiant Welshman*'s British king Guderous, a minor character but recognisably the son of the Roman equivalent to Cymbeline, Cunobelinus (102-03).

as it were, on its own authority. As such, to question the historical truth of Brute, or his descendants Lud, Lear, or Gorboduc, was to undermine the integrity of pre-Roman British culture and origins as a whole, characterised as a civilisation of cities, temples, conquering armies, and universities, presented as the equal of any nation in the classical world, long pre-dating Rome.¹⁶ This threat of historiographic obliteration, of relinquishing this patriotically useful heritage, made it difficult to abandon the tradition: the Jacobean writer Edmund Bolton expressed his concern that to do so would leave only a “vast Blanck upon the Times of our Country, from the Creation of the World till the coming of Julius Caesar” (sig. Cc2v-3r). I am interested in this notion of a historiographic tradition of centuries collapsing into a “vast blanke,” and that certain characteristics of this tradition’s treatment in plays such as *King Lear*, *No-body and Some-body*, and *Cymbeline* could have triggered this sense of collapse in those who read and watched them. “Who of nothing can something make?” (sig. A2v) asks the prologue in *No-body and Some-body*. “[N]othing can come of nothing” (sig. B2r), *King Lear* replies.

Therefore, in order to retain my focus on this transition from historical being to non-being, the scope of this thesis is restricted to drama representing events traditionally placed from the “landing of Brute” to the reign of Cymbeline, a king residing on the outer limits of historicity, a hinterland of overlapping but incompatible Brutian and Roman accounts. Thus this is also a study of how early modern drama represented and grappled with the notion of Britain’s eroding pagan origins. The principal dramas and events covered are listed in the following chart:

¹⁶ Throughout *Roman Invasions*, John Curran has argued that English competition with Rome was the driving motivation for the *Historia* and its early modern proponents.

Text / Event (source noted for texts not published in print editions)	Performed / Published	Company and performers; venue	Author(s); first publisher	Text extant?
Henry VII's entry at York (text recorded in Cottonian MS. Julius B. xii)	1486	"Diverse personage and minstrelsies"; performed at Micklegate Bar, York	Devised under the direction of Henry Hudson	Yes
Henry VII's entry at Bristol (text recorded in Cottonian MS. Julius B. xii)	1486	Unnamed citizens of Bristol; Performed in the vicinity of St John's Gate, Bristol	Anon.	Yes
Elizabeth I's royal entry at London (performance recorded in BL: Cotton MS. Vitellius F)	1558	Unnamed London livery company members; performed at Temple Bar, London	Anon.	No.

<i>Gorboduc</i>	perf. 1562 pub. 1565	“Gentlemen of the Inner Temple”; performed at the Inner Temple and Whitehall Banqueting House	auth. Thomas Sackville; Thomas Norton pub. William Griffith	Yes.
<i>The Joyful Receiving of the Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty (The Entertainment at Norwich)</i>	perf. 1578; pub. 1578	Passages performed by Sir Robert Wood, Mayor of Norwich, “and others”; Performed in the vicinity of St Stephen’s Gate, Norwich	auth. Bernard Garter; Thomas Churchyard ¹⁷ pub. Henry Bynneman	Yes
<i>King Ebrauk with All His Sons</i> (text recorded in BL: Harley MS. 2125, f. 43*)	1589	Performers unknown; performed at Chester before the Earl of Derby	Anon.	No
<i>Locrine</i>	perf. c. 1590 pub. 1595	Unknown	auth. anon. pub. Thomas Creede	Yes
<i>Guthlack (Cutlack)</i> (recorded in Philip Henslowe’s <i>Diary</i>)	perf. 1594	Admiral’s Men; Rose playhouse	Anon.	No
<i>King Leir (Leir)</i>	perf. 1594 pub. 1605	Queen’s men	auth. Anon. pub. John Wright	Yes
<i>King Lude</i> (Henslowe)	perf. 1594	Sussex’s Men; Rose playhouse	Anon.	No

¹⁷ Wiggins assigns separate entries in the *Catalogue* to the separate events performed before Elizabeth at Norwich. The speech given by the Brutan king Gurgunt is attributed to Garter and Churchyard (Wiggins, vol. II, ref. 637).

<i>2 Seven Deadly Sins</i> ¹⁸ (plot recorded in Dulwich College, MS xix)	perf. c. 1597	see note	Anon.	No
<i>Mulmutius Dumwallow</i> (Henslowe)	perf. 1598	Admiral's Men; Rose playhouse	William Rankin	No
<i>The Conquest of Brute</i> (Henslowe)	perf. 1598	Admiral's Men; Rose playhouse	John Day; Henry Chettle	No
<i>Brute Greenshield</i> (Henslowe)	perf. 1599	Admiral's Men; Rose playhouse	Anon.	No
<i>Ferex & Porex</i> (Henslowe)	perf. 1600	Admiral's Men; Rose playhouse	William Haughton	No
<i>The Triumphs of Re- united Britania</i>	perf. 1605; pub. 1605	Lord Mayor's Show (sponsored by the Merchant Taylors' Company)	auth. Anthony Munday pub: William Jaggard	Yes
<i>No-body and Some- body</i>	unknown; pub. 1606	Queen Anna's Men; unknown	auth. anon pub. John Trundle	Yes

¹⁸ This episodic play is partially recorded in a manuscript "plot" of players' entrances and exits surviving in Philip Henslowe's papers (Dulwich College, MS xix). *2 Seven Deadly Sins* includes what appears to be an account of the events also shown in *Gorboduc* and, presumably, the Rose's *Ferex & Porex*. The play's date and playing company has been roundly debated, but the most recent persuasive argument is David Kathman's, who has used the provenance of the plot and the actors it names to argue for a date of c. 1597-98 (14). The critical debate, in which Kathman was challenged by, and responded to, Andrew Gurr in the pages of *Early Theatre*, is usefully summarised at the *Lost Plays Database* ("The Second Part of the Seven Deadly Sins"). Wiggins follows Kathman in dating and company attribution (3: ref 1065).

<i>King Lear</i>	perf. 1606; pub. 1608	The King's Men; Globe playhouse and Whitehall Banqueting House	auth. William Shakespeare pub. Nathaniel Butter	Yes
<i>Belynus (&) Brennus</i> (recorded in Add MS 27632, f. 43r)	unknown; before 1609	The reference appears in a list of playbooks owned by Sir John Harrington, compiled c. 1609	Anon.	No
<i>Cymbeline</i>	perf. c. 1611; pub. 1623	King's Men; Globe playhouse and Whitehall Banqueting House	auth. William Shakespeare pub. Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard	Yes
<i>Fuimus Troes</i>	perf. c. 1611-32; pub. 1633	"Gentleman students"; Magdalen College, Oxford	auth. attributed to Jasper Fisher pub. Robert Allott	Yes
<i>Albions Trivmph</i>	perf. 1632; pub. 1632	"The King's Majesty and his lords" with Queen Henrietta Maria; Whitehall Banqueting House	auth. Aurelian Townshend pub. Robert Allott	Yes
<i>A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle (Comus)</i>	perf. 1634; pub. 1637	perf. by members of the Castlehaven family and household; Ludlow Castle	auth. John Milton pub. Humphrey Robinson	Yes

<i>Madon, King of Britain</i> (<i>Madan?</i>)	perf. unknown; Stationer's Register entry: 1660	Unknown	Attributed to Francis Beaumont ¹⁹	No
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I suggest that the temporal and dramaturgical range of the performances and playbooks included here argues against any sense of an early modern “canon,” or genre, of Brutan drama. In doing this I resist a critical tendency to bundle these texts together as a canon of plays defined by what they share, but not distinguished by their manifest temporal, stylistic, and functional differences.²⁰ Each performance and playbook is a product of its cultural moment, and this is reflected in both form and thematic preoccupation. *Gorboduc*, a Senecan drama concerned with secure royal succession and the rule of law, cannot be separated from its early Elizabethan and Inns of Court origins, just as *Cymbeline* is manifestly a product of dramaturgical trends in the years 1609-11 and James VI and I’s irenic foreign policy. It is apparent that several of these performances took place in the presence of English monarchs, from Henry VII to Charles I, and thus were shaped by a desire to influence, appease, or aesthetically please those monarchs; however it is equally apparent that many of these performances, particularly those represented by the “lost” repertory of 1590s Brutan drama performed at the Rose playhouse and recorded in Philip Henslowe’s

¹⁹ This attribution is doubtful, given that the same Stationer’s Register entry contains several unlikely ascriptions, including several plays assigned to Shakespeare (Wiggins 4: ref. 1608).

²⁰ John Curran’s study of early modern “Galfridian” drama, in which he explores the authors’ possible attitudes to the historicity of their sources plays, uses this approach, grouping the plays without attending to the substantial differences between them in terms of year of production, genre, and cultural function (“Imagining”).

Diary, seem to have been a response to popular tastes. The Rose grouping, admittedly, may represent a “canon” in a similar way to Shakespeare’s plays on English medieval history – as shaped by an overarching sense of intertextual design and repertorial planning. Yet in Heywood’s comment in *An Apology for Actors*, these performances are absorbed into the larger cultural project of staging “English chronicles” (as Heywood termed them) as a whole. In fact, it is significant that the performance of Brutus history seems not to have been considered as distinct from other instances of performed history. It provided the foundation for, and thus authorised, a collective dramaturgy of national formation and identity. The integration of Brutus drama into wider contexts of performed history asserts its potential, as an eroding account of the lived past, to disturb and unsettle.

The resistance of canon-formation thus informs my methodological approach. As Herbert Lindenberger notes in discussing the idea of the history play, “the sources of many plays consist less of the historical materials on which they are purportedly based than on the theatrical conventions which give them their essential form” (4). Thus, each event or text discussed in this thesis is addressed in terms of both print and performance, and is historicised according to its cultural moment both in terms of wider political events and dramaturgical practice. For example, *Gorboduc* is examined principally via its performance as a 1562 Inns of Court production before Elizabeth I, and as a representation of widely-believed and therefore didactically useful history; and *King Lear* is addressed as a 1608 playbook published in the aftermath of James VI and I’s failed project to unite England and Scotland. The playbook and the Jacobean context are explored via a readership model centring on etiological erosion and the figure of Lear. To sustain such a reading, a degree of diachronic exclusion applies to the texts examined in a given section or chapter, in

order to reflect as closely as possible the materials available to audiences encountering the text or event under discussion. Thus, analysis of *Locrine* (1595) will make reference to *Gorboduc*, or the lost play *King Lude* (perf. 1594), but not to the Jacobean *No-body and Some-body*. However, a later discussion of *Locrine* as published in the 1664 Shakespeare third folio might address the play in the context of its appearance following *King Lear* and *Cymbeline* in the same volume. This allows for a sense of the cultural accumulation of these dramas as the era progressed; that is, they represented both a vast swathe of putatively historical time and, as Heywood observed in 1612, a substantial contribution to the history of playhouse repertory in their own moments.

This study engages with a wide range of performances and playbooks, and as such, it must also engage with an equally wide range of documentary evidence and methodological approaches to this evidence. For example, to place *Locrine* and *King Lude* within the context of playhouse drama of the 1590s, I can call upon foundational work on repertory studies by critics such as Roslyn Knutson, Sally-Beth MacLean and Scott McMillin, and Lucy Munro, whilst expanding the range of plays accessible to investigation via recent work on “lost plays” as legitimate records of performance undertaken by the editors of the *Lost Plays Database*, Knutson, David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle. Conversely, plays can be studied as print documents responsive to, or open to responses within, historical moments that were very different to the cultural conditions in which the play was first made and performed: for example, the Elizabethan *Leir* was performed at the Rose playhouse in 1594, yet was not published until 1605. This approach is supported by the field of book studies, where the publication of a playbook may be examined as a cultural event discrete from the play’s original conditions of performance, as explored by Marta Straznicky, Zachary

Lesser, and others. Central to this thesis is the “un-editing” approach to early modern texts, as argued for by Leah Marcus (*Unediting*), Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass in the 1990s, enabling the uncovering of quirks and linguistic details of a playbook’s original spelling and typography that, sometimes elided by editorial intervention, can provide striking insights into a text’s potential reception. Where available, modern edited editions of my key plays and literary texts have been consulted in terms of both introductory material and with reference to the textual notes. However, when citing from early modern texts I adopt the original spelling found in the specific text and edition in question. This approach is prompted by the fresh readings that become available in the original text and spelling. For example, one of my key readings in Chapter Three centres on the moment in Q1 *King Lear* in which Lear describes himself as undergoing a process of “Historica passio” (sig. E4r); this phrase combines the notion of suffering (“passio”) with that of history, and is manifestly resonant for a study of etiological erosion, particularly when uttered by one of literature’s most notable Brutal rulers. This reading, however, is only available in seventeenth-century editions of the play, after which it was emended in 1685 to “hysterica passio,” a medical term that has since prompted a great deal of critical investigation in relation to *King Lear* and which can be found in Samuel Harsnett’s *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603), an acknowledged source for Shakespeare’s play.²¹ “Historica,” of course, may originate as a scribal or compositional error; but, for the purposes of readership, the means by which the word appeared on the page are less important than the semantic possibilities its presence on

²¹ The first amendment to “hysterica passio” was in Shakespeare F4 in 1685 (Halpern 215). A full bibliographic outline of the textual history of the editions of *King Lear* leading to the emendation of “Historica passio” is given in Chapter Three.

the printed page might open up for the reader. For this reason, I prioritise the “old typefaces and spellings ... title pages and other paratextual matter” that reveal a complexity and multiplicity of possible interpretations (de Grazia & Stallybrass 256).

Equally, the performances in question need to be localised not only in time, but according to community. For example, alongside the expected emphasis on the various and diverse London playhouses, this study utilises evidence and scholarship relating to – for example – the drama of the Inns of Court and Oxford University, and the Stuart masque, whilst sustaining an awareness of the ways in which the presentation of these texts in print both alters and shapes their later reception. In this way, the Brutus histories can be shown to have had specific uses and values for certain groups. In essence, this approach broadly follows the notion that the cultural drift in these years was from belief to disbelief in these narratives’ historicity. Therefore, each chapter addresses a particular question relating to the experience of etiological erosion, and does so via case studies of Brutus performance situated within specific temporalities, communities, and dramaturgical moments. This should not, however, be taken as necessarily representative of the totality of thought and belief at the historical moment in question. I also work to resist the creation of a secure teleology, the misleading idea of a smooth and one-way transition across the period. Many early moderns seem to have sustained at least public belief in Brutus and his descendants well into the late seventeenth century and beyond. In 1718, when the *Historia* was finally translated into English and published, its translator Aaron Thompson dedicated his substantial preface to reassessing the arguments for and against the truth of Geoffrey’s account of “this most material point of Brutus”: Thompson asserted the “almost universal Content and Confirmation that ... learned men have given to it; from the Time this history was first published till the beginning

of the last Century, and several of the last Century also” (f. cvii). As Thompson asserts, and as his sixteen-page list of subscribers – including many churchmen and aristocrats – attests, many were still willing, or hoping, to believe in Brute.

Chapter One outlines in detail the historical conditions to which the *Historia Regum Britanniae* was responding and the subsequent forms in which the prose *Brut* was transmitted across the medieval period and into the early modern era. This transmission demonstrates the longevity, social reach, and cultural embeddedness of the Brutan histories as they reached the early modern period; they were central to the stories that the English told about themselves and their origins. Key texts that reproduced or challenged this tradition, including the works of William Caxton, John Stow, Raphael Holinshed, and William Camden, are contextualised via their interaction with “poesie historical”. In terms of Brutan history this includes works by Edmund Spenser, William Warner, and John Taylor. Through the interaction of these texts, we can track the development of the early modern controversy regarding the historicity of the Brutan origins, noting the ways in which it was both absorbed and resisted by individual writers. The chapter concludes with a case study of *Gorboduc* as a play emerging from this historiographic tradition, a species of historiography that also enables the “pretence of sensual contact with the vanished past through the bodies that move and speak on stage” (Walsh 2). That is, the authors of the first extant work of English tragic drama in verse chose as their subject figures from a historiographic tradition from whom their audience might be expected to derive a sense of national ancestry.

Chapter Two asks what it might have meant to watch or read drama portraying the Brutan histories for an audience believing themselves to be descended from the figures depicted. It addresses the notion of Britain’s ancient Trojan roots via Marian

Rothstein's research into the early modern concept that "origin defines essence" (332), or that the person or people who founded a nation, city, or dynasty, also determined its essential character. The importance of this principle to figures of British etiology, whether Brute as founder of Britain or those of his progeny and descendants said to have founded cities and institutions, is demonstrated to have had a long heritage dating at least to civic performances given before Henry VII as he toured English cities following his defeat of Richard III in 1485. Evidence from these performances suggests an uncanny quality present in the notion of a founding figure being "resurrected" in order to speak again. When connected to accounts from the London playhouses, this evidence supports the idea, as expressed in Thomas Nashe's famous description of the slain Talbot in *I Henry VI* as appearing before an audience that "imagine they behold him fresh bleeding" (sig. F4r), that the performance of history could be imagined as bringing the audience into a kind of sensory or affective contact with the historical dead. Applying this to *Locrine* I explore what it might have meant for an audience to be brought face-to-face via performance with the tragic figures who had, it was believed, founded Britain. These figures were in many ways alien, being Trojans of near-eastern heritage. Further, *Locrine* re-imagines many of its deaths as suicides, and the chapter explores the effect this has upon the model of British foundation and origins with which the play confronted its audiences. The chapter's second case study employs methodologies relating to "lost" plays, or those for which evidence of performance but no dramatic text survives, in order to explore a 1593 performance of *King Lude* at the Rose playhouse. King Lud was the Brutus re-builder of London, said to have renamed the city after himself. In addressing *King Lude* I focus not on the absent text but on the performed presence of Lud himself as a synecdoche for London. This reading is then localised with reference to the Rose's

repertory at the time of the performance, and ways in which Lud as a celebrated civic rebuilder might have been received in that moment, when the city was in the midst of long-term plague outbreaks. The chapter concludes by investigating the figure of Brute himself via the lost Rose play *The Conquest of Brute* (1598), situating the performance within what Misha Teramura has identified as a strategy at the Rose playhouse of presenting Trojan, ancient British, and Arthurian drama, effectively creating a repertory of performed history that allowed English audiences to experience their own origins as part of a continuum leading back to classical antiquity.

Chapter Three asks what it might mean to watch or read drama portraying the Brutian histories for an audience experiencing doubt as to the reality of the figures depicted, and therefore their value as a shaping influence on the present. It thus addresses the concept of historical dissonance – the creeping doubt regarding the historicity of Britain’s ancient origins – within the early Jacobean moment. Iconography relating to Brute as founder of a unified Britain was re-energised by the propagandistic needs of James VI and I’s project to unite Scotland and England into a single kingdom. The chapter traces James’s historiographic background as rooted in the work and influence of his tutor, George Buchanan, and in Scotland’s own fictive etiology, in order to argue that the English edition of his *Basilikon Doron* (1603) utilised Brute’s narrative explicitly for an English readership and that this text subsequently influenced Anthony Munday’s Lord Mayor’s Show, *The Triumphs of Re-United Britania* (1605). Whereas Chapter Two focuses on the performance of origins, this chapter principally addresses drama in print and the ways in which reading might trigger a sense of doubt and etiological erosion. Three playbooks are examined: *Leir*, an Elizabethan play published in 1605, is explored via the

combination of its acutely anachronistic Christian setting and the inclusion of the disruptive villain Skalliger, who shared his name with the era's foremost scholar of world chronology. *No-Body and Some-body*, I argue, disrupts and undermines the perceived historicity of its Brutan king, Elidure, by suborning his narrative to the play's comic subplot, centring on the character Nobody. The play's relentless punning on the word "nobody," as well as the character's onstage presence, creates a semiotics of negation and nothingness that compromises the reality of the play's purported historical characters. Finally, *King Lear* is presented via a reading in which the character of Lear might be perceived as physically experiencing his own historical extinction, an interpretation of particular resonance given that the text appeared in the years following the failure of James's union project.

Chapter Four explores what it meant to watch or read drama portraying the Brutan histories for an audience that has accepted the histories' fictiveness. It asks what happens to "history" that is no longer accepted as a record of the lived past, a status usually defined as "myth". I read *Cymbeline* through its publication as the concluding play in the 1623 First Folio, asking what that volume's, and the play's, sense of resolutions and endings might mean for a reader encountering its ancient British setting, and as a setting for the end phase of etiological erosion. I have suggested, via Barthes's definition of "myth," that the term "myth" is insufficient for iconography that is no longer in cultural use. Resisting alternative terminology and instead embracing the post-mythic Brutan histories' multivalency, I examine *Cymbeline*'s engagement with endings, and the confounding complexity and resonance of the play's character names, including those such as "Imogen" that invoke Brutan history even as they seem finally to dissolve it within the play's oversaturated semiotic field. The final section of the chapter complicates this sense of

apparent finality and teleology through a brief survey of texts published or performed in the 1630s that express either a continued engagement with Brutus historicity, including the Oxford play *Fuimus Troes*, the only extant play to explicitly cite Geoffrey of Monmouth as a source, John Milton's *Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*, which reconfigures a foundational Brutus figure as a river goddess, and the masque *Albions Trivmph*, in which Charles I himself performed the Brutus-derived figure Albanactus. My concluding section will briefly examine the ways in which a single seventeenth-century book collection, that of Frances Wolfreston (1607-77) can be seen, in microcosm, to demonstrate many of the models of readership and interaction between Brutus historiography and drama with which I have engaged.

Cumulatively, this evidence argues that, from the 1486 progress of Henry VII, embodied Brutus figures served as a means by which English institutions might navigate their relationships with English monarchs until these Brutus founders were co-opted and, eventually, absorbed by the iconography of the monarchy itself, effectively muting this dynamic exchange between the past and present. More widely, this thesis argues that the performance of Britain's ancient origins should be approached via its embeddedness in a four-hundred-year tradition that pervaded English culture throughout all social degrees. I argue that records of early modern drama present a singularly dynamic account of the ways in which audiences and readers were not only confronted with the physical presence of those origins but through which they may also have experienced their erosion into what Richard Harvey, in his 1593 defence of those origins, *Philadelphus*, unwittingly termed "books of nothing". It is with Harvey, then, that Chapter One will begin.

Textual note

Whilst original spelling has been retained for the reasons outlined above, the long “s” and use of “vv” for “w” have been modernised, whilst the original usage of “u” and “v” and “i” and “j” has been maintained. Many of the names of the characters and locations examined throughout this thesis underwent extraordinary variations of spelling not only between medieval and early modern texts, but between early modern texts and even within the same text, as will be shown productively with the pseudonym “Paladour,” or “Polidore” in *Cymbeline*. However, characters who appear frequently, such as King Lear (or Leir, Leire, Leare, etc.) will be referred to by their more familiar spelling (in this case, “Lear”) except within textual quotations or when the representation of the same figure in different plays needs distinguishing. Where possible, all quotations from early modern texts use the original signature or folio numbers. All quotations from the Shakespeare First Folio, the key text in Chapter Four, use Charlton Hinman’s “Through Line Number” system as used in the second edition of *The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare* (London: Norton, 1996).

Chapter One: Geoffrey of Monmouth and Etiological Erosion

In 1593 the writer Richard Harvey published *Philadelphus, or a Defence of Brutes*, a nationalistic defense of the truth and nobility of Britain's ancient kings. These kings were, Harvey believed, descended from the Trojan Brute, and represented a span of British antiquity that reached back more than two millennia into the classical era. Harvey was reacting from within a cultural tradition and understanding of British origins that in fact stretched back, mostly unquestioned, only as far as the twelfth century. By 1593, however, it had been questioned. Texts including Polydore Vergil's *Anglia Historia* (Basel, 1534), and George Buchanan's *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (Edinburgh, 1582) had argued that Brute and his descendents, who included King Lear and Cymbeline, had never existed. This was the trigger for Harvey's *Philadelphus*, which catalogues the vices and virtues of these ancient kings whilst arguing angrily for their historical verity. This chapter provides an account of the Brutian histories' transmission and uses from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries and concludes by exploring *Gorboduc*, arguing that the play's Brutian setting is a key component of its rhetorical apparatus.

One point of apparent weakness in the received account of Brutian history was a sequence of approximately twenty four kings, about whom the source text of these histories, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* (c. 1135), offered no information and regarding whom Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577; expanded edition pub. 1587) admitted to "great diuersitie in writers touching the reignes of these kings, and not onlie for the number of yéeres which they should continue in their reignes but also in their names"

(1587: I, *Hist.*22).¹ That is, the silence regarding the events and duration of these reigns raised uncomfortable questions regarding the historicity of the larger narrative in which they were embedded. Responding to the long-dead Buchanan, Harvey launches a vivid defence of the British origins, offering an extraordinary range of justifications for this unsettling lacuna. For its sustained energy and the resourceful invention of his reasoning, the passage is worth quoting at length:

They were now I may well say kinges Abstracts: that they did it no where, either incomprehensibly like Gods, or metaphisically like strange men ... A king cannot possibly be without his excellencies, and memorials. Now I diuine modestly, heere were actors without recorders of their actions, patrons of learning, but no learned men: or, they were of both sortes, but their studies came to no effect, by some force: or, they were very old when they came to the Crown, and could do nothing: or, the furies and helhoundes raged so extreemely, that the Muses and Graces coulde not bee quiet for them: or, their actes were wrought in needleworke onely, and so worne out: or, the senses, and senslesse desires so ruled them, that theyr liues were not so short as their actes: or, the Histories were written in some strange kind of polygraphy and steganography, and coulde neuer yet be read, but remaine in some obscure place: or, they made little account of writers, and these set as light by them: or, they that take most pains at their booke, were not most

¹ Holinshed's *Chronicles*, published in 1577 and in a much-expanded 1587 edition, poses several referencing issues, as Tim Smith-Laing has outlined. Its sections, though bound into large volumes, are separately and inconsistently paginated – for example, in the 1577 edition the description of Britain is paginated only on the recto of each folio, with the verso taking the same number whilst, in the history of Britain, folios are paginated “in the standard fashion” (Smith-Laing xx). Thus, when referencing Holinshed, I adopt the system developed for the *Oxford Handbook to Holinshed's Chronicles* (xix-xxi).

regarded: and thereupon studied to themselues: or, some infortunate and maleuolent configuration of mouable skies and starres, and spirites remoued all Histories out of the way: or, the Kinges and People agreed among themselues, to bee remembred by being not remembred, wishing to haue their time called *The vnknowe Regiment*, adiudging secrecie greatest wisdom: or, our Countrimen listened so much after other Noble Actors in the earth, that they had no leisure, to doe any thing themselues: or, they disdained to haue them theyr iudges after their death, whom they would scorne to haue their iudges in their life: or, some outlandish enuy destroyed the rowles and registers of our Histories, to make vs seem barbarous: or, the Vniuersitie men of *Stamford* had by some Priuiledge got them wiues, and so forth: and had no leisure to do any thing but liue: or, before the kings were crowned, they were worthy men, and after theyr coronations they fell to make books of nothing ... it was not thus, or so: perhaps, neither this, nor that, but some other way, I cannot tell howe, nor I care not greatly, for feare I may bee thought neither idle, nor well occupied. (sig. H2v-sig. H3v)

Harvey appears both moved and disturbed by Buchanan's attacks as he accumulates his sequence of semantic contortions and paradoxes. Each of his scenarios tumbles into negation. There were actors but no action; patrons of learning but an absence of "learned men"; general chaos – "furies and hellhounds" – is invoked; the materiality of recorded time is found wanting as these rulers' acts were recounted in long-perished textiles;

strange codes may have been used;² the absence is so extraordinary and unaccountable that it must have been cosmically induced by malevolent astrological configurations of “mouable skies and stares”. Harvey imagines the nature of the rulers themselves, suggesting they experienced a kind of urge for historiographic eradication, a desire to be known only as the “vnknow[n]e Regiment,” or unknown regime. In Harvey’s visions nothing is solid, everything from the materiality of texts to the character of kings to the heavens themselves are characterised by entropy and annihilation. Yet, perhaps more troubling still, neither do any of these suggestions seem adequate, and Harvey moves from one to the next into literary breathlessness: “[I]t was not thus, or so: perhaps, neither this, nor that, but some other way, I cannot tell howe”. Of the many possibilities that Harvey proposes, he refuses the most glaring: that these kings were invented by Geoffrey of Monmouth. His suggestion that the kings “fell to make books of nothing,” however, seems to me an inadvertent gesture towards this possibility; an incipient doubt. If the *Historia* was disproved, then that is what the first millennium of British history would amount to, along with the thousands, even millions, of pages of chronicle material, typological exegesis, ballads and, latterly, plays, that sustained and repeated them: books of nothing.

Harvey was responding emotionally to a historiographic problem and process: the gradual, evidence-based, elision of Britain’s ancient origins from accepted history, a process I have termed etiological erosion. He was mocked for it. In an episode reported by Thomas Nashe in *Have With You to Saffron Waldon* (1596), one that also demonstrates the blurred lines between writers and literary genre, Christopher Marlowe

² The intellectual energy that Harvey brings to bear on his project is perhaps suggested by the fact that his is the first recorded use of the word “polygraphy”; in this sequence, Harvey’s is also the first recorded use of the word “hieroglyphically” (sig. H3v), predating the OED’s first recorded use of the word “hieroglyph” by eight years (*OED Online*).

paints a picture of Harvey as an impassioned advocate of Brute as a historical figure, describing

[T]hat Dick, of whom Kit Marloe was wont to say, that he was an asse, good for nothing but to preach of the Iron Age ... Dick the true Brute or noble Troian, or Dick that hath vowd to liue and die in defence of Brute, and this our iles first offspring from the Troian, Dick against baldnes, Dick, against Buchanan. (sig. N3v)

Nashe is not a reliable witness, and the account is part of a long deluge of insults, yet the characterisation in the matter of Brute the Trojan, I suggest, echoes Harvey's voice in *Philadelphus* in arguing for a posture of overheated, passionate belief in a tradition of British origins that moves beyond the purely intellectual or historiographic.

Observing and commenting upon Harvey's passion and conflict was Marlowe, a writer of poetry and plays. As discussed above, the early modern drama is a field in which, according to Heywood in his *Apology for Actors* (1612), plays had represented British and English history from "the landing of *Brute*, vntill this day" (sig. F3r). The performance of historical figures, or figures believed to be historical, creates a "dialogue with the dead that is produced through real-time, embodied acts of ventriloquism" (Walsh 21). Thus, it was through plays and performance that early modern readers and audiences could come, figuratively, face to face with the ancient British history that so animated Richard Harvey. They could encounter, in the costumed bodies of actors, figures such as Lear and Brute himself, who – some now realised – may or may not have ever lived. Yet, as was noted in *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors* (1615) by "I.G.," for audience

members already familiar with the historical account, the translation from chronicle to stage was not unmediated:

[T]hese that know the Histories before they see them acted, are euer ashamed, when they haue heard what lyes the Players insert amongst them, and how greatly they depraue them. If they be too long for a Play, they make them curtals; if too short, they enlarge them with many Fables. (f. 42)

Thus, to encounter Brutus history in performance was to experience it in ways that both flowed from a wider historiographic culture and which altered and, in I.G.'s view, depraved that culture either through injudicious omissions or the addition of "fables". The following study offers an exploration of the ways in which performed and printed drama addressing pre-Roman, pagan, British history both sustained and complicated perceptions of these histories at the very time – the mid-sixteenth to the early seventeenth centuries – that the process of etiological erosion was at its most acute.

This chapter provides wider context prior to examining the performance of the Brutus histories on the early modern stage. Specifically, I will suggest that these plays and performances were received by spectators and readers as embedded within a polyvocal and intertextual narrative history of the British Isles dating back to the twelfth century. These narratives were disseminated not only through expensive manuscripts and specialist historiographic books, but through vernacular texts as well as popular media such as ballads and plays. This complex transmission resulted in multiple, often conflicting, accounts of Britain's origins, the production and reception of which were determined in part by issues such as literacy, religion, and social grouping. The historicity of this account of ancient British history which, in its core narrative, derived from

Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* (c.1135), had in the early modern era been questioned or rejected by a number of writers of historiographic texts, from Polydore Vergil in the 1530s to William Camden's *Britannia* (1586). It is arguable, however, that support for this account of history was sustained far longer than is apparent if attention is restricted to trends in early modern historiography. This is visible in evidence ranging from the continued popularity of medieval prose histories in print and manuscript, to several seventeenth-century texts supporting the historicity of Britain's putative founder, Brute, or Brutus, who conquered the island of Albion and renamed it after himself. This, I suggest, has consequences for a consideration of the dramatic performance of Britain's ancient past, particularly in terms of its reception.

This chapter outlines the transmission of the Brutan histories from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries and their gradual, uneven disappearance from historical consciousness. This process has been mapped by previous scholars and my account is in large part indebted to these.³ However, in my focus on the Brutan histories' parallel journeys through elite and popular culture, by emphasising the degree to which these narratives were embedded within the collective historical and genealogical consciousness, my conclusions will differ from previous summaries: within certain social milieu, the Brutan histories enjoyed an active and influential cultural life long after historiographers appear to have considered the case closed. These differences are not of great significance to the larger sweep of historiographical development, but they have implications for the theatrical context of plays performed and printed between *Gorboduc* (1562; pub. 1565) and a 1634 performance of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (c. 1610; pub. 1623) before King Charles I, the main temporal span of my project. This chapter's third section serves as a

³ Two of the principal studies in this area are Thomas Kendrick's *British Antiquity* (1950), and Arthur B. Ferguson's *Utter Antiquity* (1991).

case-study, applying the preceding contextual apparatus to the first Brutan narrative known to have been given dramatic treatment, that of the ancient British king known variously as Gorbodian, Gorbodug, or Gorboduc.

Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Brutan histories in transmission

This section traces the transmission of the Brutan histories from the clerical and landowning cultures of twelfth-century Anglo-Norman England, via the medieval manuscript traditions of the vernacular prose *Brut* and its verse translations, and into early modern print culture. Adherence to the Brutan histories continued, particularly within London, for some time after their historicity had been rejected by many historiographical and elite writers.

In proposing the term “Galfridian” be resisted in favour of “Brutan histories” I am, in part, hoping to move discussion away from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s possible motivations, which have been productively and inconclusively discussed elsewhere.⁴ However, it is useful to briefly consider the conditions in which the *Historia* was composed, in order to reflect upon its initial readerships and uses as a foundation from which to consider the Brutan histories’ development and mutation. Most critics testify, happily or otherwise, to the monumental, unique reach and effects Geoffrey of Monmouth’s text achieved. The *Historia*’s popularity can be tracked through its survival in more than 200 extant manuscripts (Tolhurst, “Critics,” 3). The *Historia* was, in Francis

⁴ Much criticism has been dedicated to identifying political factionalism from Geoffrey’s dedications, and they “have generally been interpreted and dated by the shifts in political allegiance precipitated by the civil war” that began in the 1130s and continued until Henry II’s accession in 1154 (Crick 5). But the projected sequence in which these appear on manuscripts is speculative and “there is no consensus about their order” (Howlett 34). Recent work presenting various arguments for Geoffrey’s motives include Dalton; Faletta; and Tolhurst, “Divide”.

Ingledeu's words, "the exemplary historiographical work of the Middle Ages" (669), and was accepted as authentic by generations of chroniclers (Keeler 24). Importantly, the *Historia* was also a key influence and source for writers of romance, presenting the first sustained narrative of King Arthur, and in this capacity serves as the opening text in Helen Cooper's magisterial study of the romance genre (23).

Geoffrey of Monmouth "was a secular canon of St George's in the castle at Oxford" (Davies 3), that is, he operated as part of the church infrastructure but not within the monastic tradition (Robertson 50), whilst still interacting with texts and traditions originating from that culture. The *Historia* was produced in an England on the cusp of civil war provoked by a complex dispute over the succession of Henry I.⁵ Geoffrey's principal sources, aside from the mysterious "old book," were Gildas's sixth century moral "tirade" (Reeve and Wright vii) *De Excidio Britanniae*, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (c. 731), and the *Historia Brittonum* (c. 830) attributed to Nennius, and origin of the first, albeit brief, account of Brute as national founder.⁶ Connecting national origins to figures of classical antiquity was not new, and had been practised from the sixth or seventh centuries (Jones, "Geoffrey," 237). Where Geoffrey innovated, however, was in addressing, and filling, the existentially troubling temporal void in British history prior to the Romans' arrival. The earliest accounts of Britain were sparse, unedifying, and depended upon Roman authors, meaning that they "did not record a single event which antedated [Julius] Caesar's expeditions" (Leckie 30). By Geoffrey's time, the *Historia Brittonum* was the "only insular historiographical text" to address British origins (Ingledeu 677). The *Historia Regum Britanniae*, then, offered to the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman English an account that competed with the histories of continental

⁵ See Crick 1-2; Weiss xii; and Carpenter 134.

⁶ Nennius was "the *compiler* of the *Historia Brittonum*, not the sole author" (Hanning 91).

kingdoms for dignity and antiquity, bestowing structure and continuity, as well as heroic glamour, upon a previously inaccessible past. In filling up the dark millennia unexplored by previous historians, the *Historia* had “conquered time” (Davies 4), connecting the British – rather than the recent Norman arrivals – to classical and biblical narratives.⁷ This dignified the origins of the island the Normans were increasingly considering home.

Innovation – and, of course, forgery – invite scepticism as well as enthusiasm. And although perhaps most remarkable is the degree to which Geoffrey’s *Historia* was disseminated and accepted as historical in the ensuing centuries, it is important to note that there was also a trend, exploding finally in the early modern period, of resistance. However, William of Newburgh and Gerald of Wales (both writing in the 1190s) “were virtually the only two critics to voice scepticism of Geoffrey throughout the Middle Ages” (Robertson 51). Scepticism, then, was isolated. More powerful was the appeal to the landowning Anglo-Norman gentry for whom, Ingeldew has argued, the *Historia* valorised lineage and dominion by “colonizing time [and] tenanting the past with nonexistent ancestors” (675). The appeal to power was only one use to which the Brutian histories could be turned. But it would be a function utilised not only by the provincial gentry but by English royalty from Edward I to Henry VII and James VI and I, who promoted his accession to the English throne in 1603 as a British reunification.⁸ In terms of readership, Tatlock notes that the *Historia* seems to have broken free from the social circles expected to have access to, and make use of, such a text, speculating that the *Historia*, having been written for the “upper-class laity,” eventually “came more and

⁷ Davies notes that Geoffrey never uses the term “England” (4).

⁸ In 1301, Edward I wrote a letter to the Pope defending his right to Scotland via reference to Brutian history (MacColl 257). The textual foundation of these uses of the *Historia*, centring on the precedence of Brute’s son Lochrine over the younger Albanacht, inheritor of northern Britain, is examined by Roger A. Mason.

more to appeal to those for whom it was not designed' (395). This becomes increasingly significant as the Brutan histories are assimilated by producers of medieval manuscripts, principally the prose *Brut*, the oldest version of which postdates 1272, where its narrative concludes. It was an ever-extending text: new versions into the fifteenth century updated the foregoing narratives to whatever the present moment happened to be. In this way the Brutan histories always flowed into the present.

Woolf gives as good a description as can be found of the transmission of historiographic texts in manuscript across the medieval period:

[C]hronicles were copied, borrowed, and paraphrased. They often grew more by gradual accretion than by conscious design or systematic composition ... But this was precisely what kept the genre alive, allowing it to grow and change to suit the purposes of generation after generation of writers. ("Genre" 351)

It was in this culture that the Brutan histories, rather than Geoffrey's original text, seem to have become the preeminent account of British etiology. Wace's Francophone verse adaptation of the *Historia*, the *Roman de Brut* (c. 1150), is "the earliest extant vernacular chronicle of British history" and as such inaugurated the process of making Geoffrey's Latin work available to wider audiences (Weiss xi). Wace "did not translate his primary source so much as he adapted it ... paraphrasing, expanding, and elaborating" (Caldwell 678), thereby widening the gap between the *Historia* and future accounts of British etiology. Wace's work served as the source of a further verse iteration, Lazamon's early thirteenth-century *Brut* (Bzdyl 11). Only surviving in two manuscripts, Lazamon's work must be approached cautiously when considered in terms of wider trends and dissemination. With that caveat, however, W. R. J. Barron's research into Lazamon's

possible patronage proposes the dissemination of that text throughout a landowning household and “extended *familia*” of “household retainers,” associated artisans and servants, as well as the landowner’s spouse and others “not resident but gathering in the lord’s hall upon occasion,” possibly to hear texts such as *Lazamon*’s read aloud (173). In the context of texts more widely disseminated than *Lazamon*’s, this conception of a diverse yet interconnected audience for historiographical narratives, and the possibility, via a shared household, of a degree of oral dialogic response to those narratives, prefigures an early modern theatrical spectator primed and equipped to enjoy and analyse the performance of Brutan histories, interrogating their meaning but not, necessarily, their historicity.

Wace influenced *Lazamon*, but his popularising effect was far more direct; the *Roman de Brut* served as the source for the first half of the prose *Brut* (Marvin, “Havelock,” 283). This anonymous text was the most significant repository of the Brutan histories, surviving in its Middle English version in more copies than any other Middle English text except the Wycliffite Bible (Lamont 286), with over 240 manuscripts extant in total: fifty in Anglo-Norman, 180 Middle English and twenty in Latin (Marx and Radulescu xiv). Crick suggests that the prose *Brut* must have been inescapable in the fifteenth century for anyone connected to the book trade “whether as scribes, illuminators, binders, and booksellers or as librarians, readers, hearers, and owners” (Crick 9), creating the foundation for “national historical consciousness” (Marvin 4). Further, and with an eye to contextualising the performance of Brutan histories in the early modern era, the prose *Brut* has been characterised not as “a singular text but as a fluid, collaborative, and ongoing project” (Gillespie and Harris 142), attributed in some manuscripts to a polytemporal authorship of “[m]ani dyvers goode men and grete clerkes and namely men of religion” (London, BL, MS Harley 24, f. 1r. qtd. in Drukker, “I Read” 97). This

description of a collaboratively assembled yet anonymous text further supports the notion that the term “Galfridian” prevents us from envisaging the collective production and experience of the Brutan histories.

It has been observed that, considering its exceptional influence, the prose *Brut* has received very little critical attention (Marx & Radulescu, Introduction, 13). A recent volume of essays, however, presents valuable work on readership and transmission through the study of marginalia. *Readers and Writers of the Prose Brut* (ed. Marx and Radulescu) foregrounds the text’s function as an interactive resource, as well as its continued use and relevance in the print era.⁹ This is important when considering possible attitudes towards the historicity of the Brutan histories, and the value placed on their role in determining etiological identity, which might be defined as the association of an individual or group’s present characteristics with the nature of their remotest ancestors. This identity could intertwine national history as well as personal and social genealogy in the creation of “textual communities,”¹⁰ communities that, I suggest, were by the late sixteenth century primed to receive and process the performance of the Brutan histories without encountering, or actively countering, what Ferguson characterises as the “crisis of belief” taking place in more scholarly circles.¹¹

Reading, including reading historiographic texts, was often a communal activity, carried out aloud, for the purpose of analysis or debate, meaning that a text could be transmitted far beyond its owner and reader (Woolf, “Speech,” 159-60). Supporting this,

⁹ Elizabeth J Bryan attests that “[m]any if not most of the readers’ annotations in the fifteenth century [prose *Brut*] manuscripts were made by sixteenth- or seventeenth-century hands” (131).

¹⁰ The term ‘textual communities’ is cited by Amy Noelle Vines. Vines attributes the term to Brian Stock, who “presents a model of the text’s role as a force which offers organisation and cohesiveness to a group of people” thus providing “a useful tool in examining patterns in medieval readership” (qtd. in Vines, “Thys Ys” 71).

¹¹ Ferguson, *Utter Antiquity*, especially 84-105.

to a degree, Amy Noelle Vines places the Middle English prose *Brut* as central to “the family as a medieval textual community” (72). Vines describes a fifteenth-century manuscript, bequeathed to one Esabell Alen by her uncle, a Salisbury vicar, inscribed with a request that she pray for his soul (75-76). Here, the prose *Brut* appears to serve as a devotional text, suggesting the function assigned it by Marvin as a “species of Old Testament” (6-7) anchoring present events – war, family bereavement – to a shared antiquity. Tamar Drukker’s study of marginalia supports the possibility that this example is not atypical, noting the probability that any fifteenth-century household possessing more than one book was likely also to own a *Brut* (Drukker, “I Read,” 97). These were often included in the household miscellanies that worked to “construct and preserve the collective memory of the household” (Hardman 27; qtd. in Radulescu 192). Annotators seem to have favoured material relating to the British kings, their wars, and “natural disasters”; annotation is often denser in the opening chapters – the material relating the Brutan histories – and, whilst Drukker appears disappointed by the “surprisingly unoriginal” and near-identical nature of much marginalia between manuscripts, this evidence suggests that the Brutan histories may have received consistent readings in diverse regional locations (99-102). Further, Drukker’s work testifies to ways in which these texts became a site for present readers to engage with their books’ sometimes long past owners, citing Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Hatton 50, f. 6v, where a reader amends a date within the text only to be corrected by another with the phrase “I think this is mistaken” (106). Here, the Brutan histories keep step with the present through the reader’s intervention in matters of perceived temporal precision.

This theme is picked up by Elizabeth J. Bryan, who examines sixteenth-century annotations in MS Hatton 50, a version of the prose *Brut* informed by reformist concerns which create a “cumulative conversation, sometimes debate, being conducted through the

medium of history” (131). Bryan reminds us of the prose *Brut*’s vast temporal context, noting that these annotations are additions to texts with twelfth-century origins “translated into English for fifteenth-century readers from drapers to kings, which prove still to be a serious ground for dialogue for a range of readers with stakes in Reformation-age English nationalism” (131-32). This is testament to the manuscript Brutan histories’ survival into the print era as living, utilised texts. Many of the prose *Brut*’s readers added their own genealogies to household copies (Radulescu, “Gentry,” 192). In this way they were passing down and in some cases inscribing their identities upon an account of British history that led back, via Brute, to the creation of the world. Early British history and British origins, then, were for some readers neither as remote nor abstract as many sixteenth-century writers of historiographic texts would characterise them. Rather, they were a wider context in which to situate and dispute familial, national and spiritual identity and continuity; they were proof of consequential origins.

Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, the Brutan histories were repurposed and repeated, with varying degrees of fidelity, creating a network of vernacular, poetic and historiographic traditions that lionised a single national origin. This network was pervasive enough that, for non-specialist readers, the Brutan histories offered so definitive an account of the national past that scepticism or further enquiry may have seemed unnecessary, in the same way that few early modern readers would have felt compelled to question the historicity of, for example, King John. The sixteenth century, however, in a process driven by humanist enquiry, witnessed the erosion of the Brutan histories in certain textual communities even as they were, arguably, further disseminated and reinforced in others. The struggle between scepticism and patriotic faith is addressed in two studies. The first, Kendrick’s *British Antiquity* (1950) is still authoritative in many ways, despite a cheerful scornfulness regarding the perceived intellectual shortcomings of

the Bruton histories' supporters. Kendrick clearly identifies the principal texts on either side, alongside the ideological and historiographic concerns driving the disputants. A more recent study, Ferguson's *Utter Antiquity* (1991), addresses the ways in which early modern historiography approached the remote past, from classical mythology to the "British History," arguing that the collective response on both sides was one of discomfiting uncertainty regarding those texts' historicity, resulting in the aforementioned "crisis of belief" (84). This "crisis," however, might be seen as manifesting itself in different ways, from the acutely hostile "belief" of John Bale, to the equivocating doubts expressed in Camden's *Britannia*, the complex intermingling of belief and doubt that manifests as historical dissonance.

In the sixteenth century traditional models of historiographic practice, along with the texts these practices had generated, were under increasing scrutiny. William A. Kretschmar suggests that assessing the accuracy of received historical accounts proved difficult in part because the only recognised authorities were textual, and therefore anyone attempting to write or assemble a historiographic text "was at the mercy of the judgment (or lack of judgment) of his predecessor" (523). Not only the Bruton histories but the very means by which the historicity of persons and events had been determined were being revealed as increasingly fragile. Thus the controversy was characterised by what Ferguson describes as "not so much ... outright expressions of disbelief or scepticism as ... a typically Renaissance state of ambivalence" (26), or by Veyne's "modalities of wavering belief". Ferguson and Kendrick present a narrative in which the Bruton histories are transformed from accepted, lived history to a form of poesis historical, termed "tales from British dreamtime" by Anne Lake Prescott (320), which then shifted into the more obscure category of discarded mythology reserved for forgotten tales. In the following paragraphs, whilst sketching the narrative that shows early modern

historiography moving from belief to disbelief, I will offer if not an alternative account then at least an alternative emphasis. Texts that resisted or ignored the developments in historiographic technique brought about by writers such as William Camden, John Speed, and John Selden were also often successful in print and, through affordability or tone, appealed to textual communities resistant to anti-Brutan arguments. These communities might include the lawyers of the Inns of Court and the complex urban networks that radiated outwards from the London livery companies. For both these groups, Brutan figures loomed large as national and civic founders. Their texts, which I would argue include performed history, evidence a parallel journey for the Brutan histories through the early modern period, one in which the questioning of their historicity was delayed, and often not only resisted but replenished. The first decades of English print culture should be characterised as overseeing a wider and more sustained dissemination of the prose *Brut* and Brutan histories than ever before. This was due in part to William Caxton.

The first historiographic text printed in English was Caxton's *Cronicles of Englond* (1480). The book reproduced an iteration of the prose *Brut* and was extended by Caxton to include material up to 1461 (Tonry 171n). Woolf frames Caxton as a "businessman rather than a scholar," aiming to meet his customers' interests ("Shapes" 187), suggesting a pre-existent market for national history, and Brut texts in particular. This is further suggested by Caxton's decision within two years of the *Cronicles* to publish Ranulph Higden's fourteenth-century *Polychronicon*, and his own *Liber Ultimus* (Tonry 171n). Both texts incorporated the Brutan histories, the latter integrating these with more recent material taken from London civic history for a readership of "well-informed mercantile Londoners" (179), demonstrating a continuation of the ways in which medieval Brut manuscripts had assimilated national and civic etiologies. London, it was believed, had been founded by Brute as Troinovant, or New Troy, and rebuilt by

King Lud, who renamed the city after himself in the final years before the birth of Christ. *Cronicles* was reprinted in several editions up to 1528 and its readers' attentiveness is attested by copies containing marginal notes and annotations (Crick 23).¹² Caxton's activities suggest an expansion of the *Brut*'s readership into print markets that might be viewed as building upon and sustaining, rather than challenging or entirely superseding, the medieval manuscript tradition. The influence of *Cronicles*, and thus of the prose *Brut*, continued to the seventeenth century, serving as the foundation for William Warner's verse history *Albions England* (Marvin, "Havelock," 303), which had received ten editions between 1586 and 1612. The endurance of the prose *Brut*, then, is visible in the era of Camden's *Britannia* and John Speed's *History of Great Britain* (1611). These two texts are often cited as marking the end of the Brutan tradition in a process of erosion that began with Polydore Vergil, whose works initially triggered rage amongst English polemicists and historiographers.¹³

Vergil, an Italian scholar working in the court of Henry VII, was commissioned to write the *Anglia Historia* (Basel, 1534). This work effectively triggered the controversy over accounts of history deriving from the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, principally the *Historia*'s presentation of pre-Roman Britain and the reign of King Arthur. Vergil was not the first to express doubts in print, but his foreignness and Catholicism upset his detractors, meaning that supporters of the Brutan histories, especially in the mid-sixteenth century, would often be associated with English Protestant nationalism (Crick 24-25), although polemical resistance frequently focused on the pre-Brute or post-Christian eras

¹² Woolf notes that the *Brut* was "published in 1480 and again in 1482, with four more editions before 1500 and seven others over ensuing decades" ("Genre" 324).

¹³ Citations include Kendrick 13; Ferguson 104; Gooch 21; Crick 23-24; Woolf, "Common Voice," 37n.

of British antiquity.¹⁴ Kendrick cites John Bale, “a man of great learning ... blinded by religious prejudice,” (69) who argued that Vergil was “polutynge oure Englyshe chronicles most shamefullye with his Romishe lyes” (*A Breve Chronycle* (f. 5r); qtd. in Ashe 158). One aspect of Bale’s particular investment in British antiquity, and in challenging Vergil, derived from putatively ancient chronicles collated by the writer Annius of Viterbo and published in 1498 (Kendrick 69-76). Specifically, “Annius offered enticing hints, drawn from Genesis, Eusebius, and his own imagination, of [English] ... descent from Japhet,” one of the sons of Noah said to have populated the post-diluvian world (Grafton, *Scaliger* 2.78). Bale seized upon these forgeries to claim an originary British religion founded by the pre-Brute Samothēs, who “restored than agayne thys lande in ... posteryte” (Bale, *Actes*, F10r). This allowed Bale to argue that, via its pre-Brutan origins, Britain could trace its spiritual practices back to the biblical patriarchs. However, in continental historiography there was “a strong drive to denounce Annius’s ‘forgeries’” (Grafton, *History* 101) and, as will be shown, by the second edition of Holinshed’s *Chronicles* in 1587, this alternative vision of antiquity was already being rejected. This accounts, perhaps, for the almost complete absence of the Samothēs narrative in early modern drama. Bale’s other use of Geoffrey’s *Historia* for his polemic focused on the pre-papal establishment of Christianity in Britain by Lucius, a Roman legate, thereby predating the expedition of Augustine and showing that “Britons always had the true doctrine of the primitive, apostolic church” (Hadfield, *Literature* 62). In this way, too, Bale’s reformist engagement with Brutan history largely bypasses the pre-Christian centuries from Brute to Cymbeline. Similarly, John Foxe’s polemical uses of British

¹⁴ This antagonism went both ways, as Ashe notes, “several Catholic writers mocked the Protestant reliance upon the Galfridian myth in asserting the antiquity of their Church; meanwhile, one or two others contrarily sought to appropriate it for their own use” (158). Ashe cites Highley 84-91; MacColl, “Construction,” 605-7.

antiquity in his *Actes and Monuments* (1563) focused on the centuries after the birth of Christ in order to promote his Protestant model of early British Christianity (Hamilton 150). The Brutan histories from Brute to Cymbeline, then, whilst bridging the Samothean and early Christian British eras, seem not to have been central to English Protestant polemic.

There were other, nationalist, reasons to resist Vergil. Arthur Kelton's *A Chronycle with a Genealogie Declaryng that the Brittons and Welshemen are Linealiye Dyscended from Brute* (1547) defended the Brutan histories in order to protect the special status they conferred upon the Welsh as descendants of the original British, who had been pushed west by the Saxon incursions, and attacked Vergil's "slandorous stile" (sig. C3v).¹⁵ It is typical of the historical dissonance associated with the Brutan histories that, whilst commissioning Vergil's sceptical history, Henry VII had also highlighted his own descent from Brute; he exploited this association, naming his eldest son Arthur "that in his person the 'return' of a British Arthur might be accomplished" (Parsons 398).

Vergil critiqued not only the Brutan histories, particularly King Arthur, but those who asserted their historicity:

There is nothing more hidden, nothing more uncertain, nothing more unknown than early deeds of the Britons ... by which the unschooled common run of men (for whom novelty always counts more than truth) seem transported to heaven with wonder. (trans. Sutton)

¹⁵ John Price's *Historiae Britannicae Defensio* (1536) also provided a defence of the Brutan histories in a Welsh context.

In referring to the “unschooled common run of men,” Vergil describes the textual community most likely to favour the Brutian histories. Prior to the Reformation, prior to Bale, Vergil sees his only obstacle to truth as being an apparent popular tradition driven by a lack of specialised education (“the unschooled”) and an appetite for the fantastical, a description that might be applied to the textual network that sustained the prose *Brut* and Brutian histories in general in the medieval era and both drove and rewarded Caxton’s decision to publish. Additionally, as Stephen Greenblatt has observed, the “experience of wonder” was “a central recurring feature in the early discourse of the New World” (19), and in this context might suggest ways in which pagan Britain was perceived as alien, even foreign and exotic, even as it was looked to for rootedness and origins. This discourse will prove particularly relevant when examining *Locrine*, which foregrounds the Trojan and pagan nature of Brute and his sons, configuring them perhaps as both ancestors and alien colonisers. But it should be clear that, in print at least, an account of the past that was uncontroversial at the turn of the fifteenth century was, by the middle of the sixteenth, subject to increasing pressures that may have triggered doubts even in those, such as Bale, whose apparent belief was inseparable from his Protestantism and polemical work.

From the mid-sixteenth century, the Brutian histories were, whilst continuing to appear in historiographic texts, also utilised in exemplary, nationalistic and poetic contexts, thereby participating in a lively and combative print culture. This is addressed in Woolf’s account of the decline of the medieval chronicle – that is, a chronological account of the past arranged by dates or reigns – as the definitive literary genre via which texts addressing the past were transmitted. The chronicle, Woolf suggests, “did not so much decay as dissolve into a variety of genres,” including “antiquarian treatises and classically modelled histories ... historical drama, verse, and prose fiction” (“Genre” 323).

It should not be taken from this, however, that “variety” suggests mutual isolation. Indeed, attentiveness to a high degree of intertextual interests on the part of individual writers, their coteries and textual communities, shows how apparently generically distinct texts may be viewed together as promoting the historiographical consciousness, however internally divided or dissonant, of a particular group or institution.

The output of stationer and author Richard Grafton might be seen as providing both a mid-century establishment view of the Brutus histories and a glimpse of how these were treated within a particular textual community. Grafton published the first official English Bibles and was King’s Printer to Henry VIII and Edward VI (Devereaux 34). In 1569, his *Chronicle at Large* appeared. Dedicated to William Cecil, the text’s frontispiece aligned images of Brutus and his sons with Old Testament figures and included a letter “to the Reader” from the lawyer Thomas Norton.

Norton writes that Grafton “hath brought things vnknowne from darknesse,” protecting English readers, particularly “princes,” from the “slaunderous reportes of foreyne writers,” a probable reference to Vergil (unpaginated). Seven years earlier, in 1562, Norton had, with Thomas Sackville, co-authored *Gorboduc*, the “first recorded play in blank verse, the first recorded play to use dumb shows” (Winston, “*Gorboduc*,” 23), and the first recorded Brutus drama. Sackville had also contributed episodes and an introduction to a 1563 edition of the *Mirror for Magistrates* (Woolf, “From Histories,” 57), a multi-authored verse text in the *de casibus* tradition that, by 1574, had acquired an additional “First Part” by John Higgins. Higgins “saw the need for a prequel” (Hadfield, “Niccols,” 164) and turned to the Brutus histories even as he acknowledged that the traditional account was “uncertaine & briefe” (unpaginated). In turning to the Brutus histories, Bruda suggests, Higgins was “reacting against contemporary trends in English historiography” (4) and, perhaps, positioning the *Mirror*’s potential readership away from

the “originally targeted political authorities to the urban citizenry” (3). However, these “political authorities” arguably included figures such as Grafton and Norton, and thus Higgins’s additions to the *Mirror* may be seen not as redirecting its appeal, but expanding it, inviting the “urban citizenry,” the very group perhaps alluded to by Vergil, into an elite textual milieu that appears to have endorsed Brutan historicity. The London citizenry appear here in the context of an enduring attachment to the Brutan histories in the face of increasingly acknowledged dissonance. They represented a market that was eager for affordable works that integrated ancient and civic history, and which was dominated by Grafton’s younger rival, John Stow.

John Stow was “the most prolific writer of history of the Tudor age and, if numbers or editions both cheap and expensive can be the measure, the most widely read” (Gillespie 1). His *Summarie* (1565) was issued and reissued in editions that fuelled the demand for historiographic texts across “a diverse range of English consumers”. Being cheap and popular, these were at the opposite end of the market from large, expensive works such as those by Grafton and, later, Holinshed (Pratt and Kastan 27), thereby potentially extending further the textual community served by Caxton and the prose *Brut*. In the 1570 edition, Stow wrote in support of Geoffrey of Monmouth, accusing sceptics of “unthankfulness” and asserting that, if Geoffrey’s work might be sympathetically approached in the context of the age in which it was written, “true Histories may of a skilful Reader be wel decerned from the false” (unpaginated). However, Archer identifies in Stow ambivalence towards the British origins, visible in differences between the *Summarie*’s drafted and printed versions. Particularly important for Stow, as a chronicler of London, was the tale of London’s foundation by Brute. Stow equivocated about this, arguing that “Antiquitie is pardonable, and hath an especial priuiledge, by interlacing diuine matters with humane, to make the first foundation of Cities more honourable” (qtd.

in Archer 25). Stow's first approach shows an awareness that historiography and historical consciousness might alter and evolve from one age to another; the second insists that the Brutian histories might, or should, be believed on the strength of their exemplarity. Despite appearing contradictory, even dissonant, these approaches seem to promote acceptance of the Brutian histories by, as it were, any means necessary. Thus, as equivocal as they may appear today, the effect of Stow's comments on a readership that had traditionally accepted the Brutian histories, households that perhaps owned inherited manuscripts of the prose *Brut*, or ageing editions of Caxton, for whom those texts were material and domestic facts, may well have been a sustaining one. It should also be observed that, whilst many pro-Brutian texts may seem equivocal in admitting the doubtful nature of British etiology, they rarely outline the prosecuting case.¹⁶ Critics of the Brutian histories such as Vergil and the Scot George Buchanan wrote in Latin and their texts were never published in England, thereby limiting both their commercial availability and literary accessibility. Thus, readers unfamiliar with these texts would only have learned of their criticism of the Brutian histories, and often not even the precise nature of that criticism, in texts that both contained and endorsed, however equivocally, those histories.

One text that often contained multiple and incompatible accounts of history was Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577), produced by a syndicate of publishers and scholars who might also be said to represent the upper sectors of the book buying public.¹⁷ It included chapters on the physical appearance of the British, British chorography (that is, the topographical description of specific regions), and ancient, pre-Christian British religion,

¹⁶ Richard Harvey's *Philadelphus* is an exception. Harvey engages with the criticisms in George Buchanan's *Rerum Scotticarum Historia* (Edinburgh, 1582) in great detail.

¹⁷ The collators have been described as 'freelance antiquarians, lesser clergymen, members of Parliament with legal training, minor poets, publishers, and booksellers' (Patterson, *Reading* vii).

alongside a comprehensive world history. Holinshed's stated ambition that the work should not "omit any thing that might encrease the readers knowledge" (1577: sig. ¶2r)¹⁸ resulted in a book that was the largest to be printed in England to that point (Pratt and Kastan 22). *Chronicles* might be imagined as the material embodiment of an early modern English historiography primed to collapse under its own weight, and at certain moments the reader of *Chronicles* may have experienced disorientation or dissonance. For example, the pseudo-historical king, Samothēs (see Chapter One), provided an early modern alternative to traditional accounts of the pre-Brute colonisation of Britain. The narrative of Samothēs was disseminated by Anniius of Viterbo as the work of an earlier scholar, Berosus. Having read almost seven thousand words on Samothēs as a historical figure, the reader of Holinshed's updated edition of 1587 then reaches the editor's alienating announcement that "I thinke good to aduertise the reader that these stories of Samothēs ... doo relie onelie vpon the authoritie of *Berosus*, whom most diligent antiquaries doo reiect as a fabulous and counterfet author" (1587: I, *Hist.* 6). That Samothēs was, in other words, a fiction. In such ways, a strategy of inclusivity designed to "encrease the readers knowledge" may have had a bait-and-switch effect, disorientating those readers seeking a secure account of the ancient past by rewarding investment in complex and detailed historiography with countering evidence that such accounts were spurious. Purchasers who had previously referenced the 1577 edition, which did not include this caveat, might have experienced particularly acute historical dissonance, as well as buyer's remorse. This suggests that the 1587 edition was responding to historiographic trends exemplified by Camden's *Britannia* (1586) which, although perhaps appearing to represent a direct influence on these changes, is certainly

¹⁸ Holinshed's "Epistle" is not included in the *Oxford Handbook*'s referencing guidelines. As such, in this instance I adopt here the pagination system used by the original volume's editors.

emblematic of them. If Holinshed's *Chronicles* might, indeed, be imagined as a particular approach to printing the past while collapsing under its own weight, fragmenting into the variety of subgenres identified by Woolf, then these should now be examined. I suggest that Camden's *Britannia*, although often presented as a standalone, evolutionary work, should be considered in the context of this fragmentation, as appearing in and contributing to an intertextual moment that was anything but historiographically conclusive.

Britannia is often presented as the moment at which English historiography accepted that the Brutus histories were simply untrue and admitted, as Kendrick puts it, "that Polydore Vergil had, after all, been right" (108). The language of Camden's demurral from tradition is exceptionally equivocal, however, endorsing Brute's historicity as if he had, as it were, a gun to his head. Nonetheless, his essential drift is unavoidable:

[L]et no man commense actions against me, a plaine meaning man, and an ingenuous student of the truth, as though I impeached the narration of Brutus ... let Brutus be taken for the father, and founder of the British nation ... seeing that, as Plinie writeth, *Even falsely to claime and challenge descents from famous personages, implieth in some sort a love of virtue.* (1610; f. 8-9)

Camden tells his readers that Brute should be "taken for the father," and that, even if a people lie about their descent from notable figures, this is symptomatic of an aspiration to virtue. Most damagingly of all, Camden laid out the reasons for scepticism in a way no

other English historiographer had yet done. It should also be observed, however, that *Britannia* was written in Latin, limiting its readership to a certain degree.¹⁹

In contrast to Camden's modernising effect, new poetic texts such as Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590; an expanded edition pub. 1596) and William Warner's *Albions England* (1586) were also adopting the Brutian histories. *The Faerie Queene* contained within its framing narrative a "chronicle of Briton kings, / From Brute to Uthers rayne," named the "Briton Moniments" (1590; II.IX, f. 324). That is, from Brute to the moment preceding the time of the reader of the "Moniments," King Arthur.²⁰ Spenser had praised Camden in *The Ruines of Time* (1591),²¹ and thus may be seen as utilising the Brutian histories in the exemplary mode of "poesie historical". This might be argued as a way in which Spenser adopted Camden's appeal to "virtue" as a trigger for his own use of the Brutian histories. *The Faerie Queene*, as Bart van Es notes, has "long been understood to shed light on Tudor historiographical practice" (21), and features prominently in much critical work examining the construction of early modern nationhood. Spenser, Ferguson argues, "planned to transmute the national legends ... into the more rarefied substance of myth" (123), an approach that would engage later producers of works that entangled the poetical and historical, such as Michael Drayton and Anthony Munday. Specifically, Spenser explicitly relates Brutian lineage to the Elizabethan present via the character of

¹⁹ *Britannia* was translated into English in 1610 by Philemon Holland. The timing of this, close to the performances of *King Lear* and *Cymbeline* as well as the publication of Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (1612), might indicate a response on Camden and Holland's part to the apparent upsurge in interest in the Brutian histories following the accession of James Stuart to the English throne.

²⁰ Chloe Wheatley notes that, in this respect, the "Briton Moniments" is "subject to the tyranny of chronology, an issue highlighted by the supposed transcription breaking off at the point at which it would have narrated contemporary events [i.e. Arthur's own life] ending midsentence" (865).

²¹ Spenser proclaims of Camden that "though time all monuments obscure, / Yet thy iust labours ever shall endure" (sig. B3r).

Britomart, one of *The Faerie Queene*'s analogues for Elizabeth herself, who learns that she is "lineally extract: / For noble Britons sprong from Troians bold" (1590; III.IX, f. 538), thereby continuing the Brutan histories' function as a means of configuring the English monarchy as both ancient and representative of "Britain" as a whole.

However, to counterbalance this view, it should be noted that Spenser's "Briton Moniments" is an acutely adumbrated version of the Brutan histories that would have offered the reader, or the dramatist seeking adaptable material, far less detail and colour than was offered either by many of Spenser's sources or by contemporary texts.²² Both Higgins's 1574 additions to the *Mirror for Magistrates* and William Warner's *Albions England* (1586), for example, included instances of vivid physical description and dialogue ideal for adaptation to the stage. Thus, while Spenser's adoption of the Brutan histories may have been influential, his poetic engagement with the narrative itself was comparatively cursory.

Albions England was a verse account of ancient history derived, as previously noted, from the prose *Brut* via Caxton. Warner's narrative leapfrogs through the Brutan histories but often favours episodes that would later be represented in playbooks published between 1590 and 1606, suggesting an interrelationship between *Albions England*, the playhouse, and the criteria used by stationers when determining which plays to purchase for publication.²³ *Albions England* is as neglected as *The Faerie Queene* is ubiquitous in criticism of early modern poetics and poesie historical, yet Francis Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598) explicitly interconnected the two, citing Spenser and Warner

²² The "Briton Moniments" engagement with the Brutan histories is characterised as "conventional" by both Mills (98) and van Es (23).

²³ Manley and MacLean, describing the narrative for the lost play "mandevell," note that the plot is developed in an episode from *Albions England* in a style that "makes it read almost like a play transcribed" and "may be a redaction" of the lost play (134; 135).

as “our chiefe heroicall Makers” (f. 282v), and terming Warner “our English *Homer*” (f. 281r). Overlooking *Albions England* may cause the historical consciousness of many early modern readers and playgoers to be misrepresented.²⁴ Therefore, whilst *Britannia* might serve as the moment at which the Brutan histories’ rejection became, in intellectual terms, complete, it should be remembered that Camden’s work was approximately coeval with *Albions England*, *The Faerie Queene*, a 1587 expanded edition of Holinshed, continuing iterations of Stow’s works and other, smaller works arguing for and against the Brutan histories.²⁵ Also, extant records from the 1590s onwards show that the Brutan histories were well-represented in the repertories of the London playhouses, making those narratives available not only to those communities served by the stationers, but to those communities’ non-literate employees and neighbours.²⁶ I have argued that the majority of readers, playgoers, and non-literate consumers of the Brutan histories may not have encountered arguments such as those of Vergil, Buchanan, or Camden. If this was the case, it is possible that, at the turn of the seventeenth century, the Brutan histories endured within many textual communities as the narratives through which the origins of Britain, London, and even the etiology of one’s own household could be encountered. Collective abandonment was, of course, the Brutan histories’ eventual fate. My argument is that certain archipelagos of belief resisted erosion, albeit within a state of greater or lesser

²⁴ Warner’s neglect is reflected in the lack of a modern critical edition of *Albions England*.

²⁵ These include Henry Lyte’s pro-Brute *Light of Britayne* (1588), and Thomas Fenne’s *Fennes Fruites* (1590), which argues against the Brutan inheritance in terms of the Trojans’ moral undesirability as forebears; Buchanan had wondered why the English should choose as their imaginary ancestors those “of whom all their posterity might justly be ashamed” (Sutton, para. 8).

²⁶ It should be noted that there are enormous difficulties in ascertaining literacy levels in the early modern period. Hackel reports that “[c]ontemporaneous assessments place literacy rates anywhere between 1 per cent and 60 per cent of the population ... and surviving records offer clues deeply at odds with one another” (140).

historical dissonance, for longer than is sometimes recognised. This is particularly suggested by the frequent inclusion of Brutian material in astrological almanacs which, as Alison Chapman notes, “enjoyed a remarkable rise in sales over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and were arguably the most popular books of the early modern period,” making them a useful means of assessing early modern “assumptions and reading practices” (1258-59). These inexpensive texts were published annually and included calendrical information, astrological prognostication regarding harvests, weather, and other events; this was combined with other useful information, which might include medical remedies, festival dates, and often timelines of world history and events. These timelines very often, although not always, indicated the beginning of British time with the arrival of Brutus, a practice that became more common after 1585 and integrated Brutian dates with significant moments from biblical and classical history, particularly the Trojan wars (Capp, *Astrology* 215-16). Woolf asserts that almanacs were “so plentiful that for the majority of Britons they were the most accessible form of history lesson” (*Social* 321). If so, it was frequently a lesson in Brutian history. This practice continued past the mid-seventeenth century and suggests once more that the Brutian histories were broadly accepted as historical by many for longer than has sometimes been suggested.

The beginning of the Stuart era famously saw a resurgence in interest in “British” history, or, at least, the rebranding of this material in print as “British,” as opposed to English. This was triggered by James VI and I’s symbolic reunification, as he framed it, of Scotland and England, and his stated project to achieve the same in law. In adopting and tacitly approving the use of tropes from the Brutian histories as an “ideological weapon” against Scottish sovereignty (Mason 62) in favour of union, James was rejecting the scepticism of his former tutor, George Buchanan, along with a competing Scottish

etiology, the medieval *Scotichronicon* (63), which, unsurprisingly, conflicted with the Brutan histories' account of Scotland's foundation.²⁷ At this time the erosion of the Brutan histories was also accelerating, although this has been overstated. For example, Graham Parry has characterised the controversy over the Brutan histories in the early Jacobean period as one of "two competing versions ... the Camdenian or authentically historical version, and the legendary version from Geoffrey of Monmouth" ("Britons" 158). This, I would argue, is over-reductive as a binary assessment, at least in terms of reception. The short-term effect of the increasing availability of competing texts – including the 1610 English translation of Camden – may have served to increase dissonance and confusion, rather than securing new converts to either version of history. Parry's interest is in the poets to whom, he argues, the Brutan histories largely appealed by the Jacobean period. However, as observed when discussing issues of definition, many "poets" also wrote historiographical texts and, if profession-as-genre is disregarded, these texts can be seen as existing alongside and interacting with those traditionally considered secure "histories," offering clues as to how attitudes to the Brutan histories may have been divided amongst different textual communities. One of these was the legal profession; *Britannica*, a collection of Latin poems by John Ross of the Inner Temple (1607), demonstrates an interest in the Brutan histories on the part of contemporary common lawyers (Hardin, "Geoffrey," 235). In this way, *Britannica* interconnects with the *Mirror for Magistrates* and *Gorboduc*, showing a Brutan tradition amongst lawyers and those with legal training that was rooted in the Brutan king Mulmutius Dunwallo, whose foundation of many British laws anchored the traditions underpinning the legal

²⁷ Mason notes that the *Scotichronicon*'s compiler, John of Fordun, referred to the English as "the British people," and claimed that "Britain" referred only to the territory subsequently named England (63).

profession within deep antiquity. In another social context, Anthony Munday's *A Brief Chronicle* (1612) endorses the Brutian histories, which is significant given Munday's role as a playwright and writer-producer of London civic pageants. Tracey Hill notes that Munday both drew frequently upon Stow's work and updated Jacobean editions of Stow's *Survey* (Munday 145), showing again how histories might be sustained through intertextual and collaborative relationships within given textual communities. *A Brief Chronicle* is dedicated to London's Mayor, as well as the Merchant Taylors livery company. This sustains the possibility, also suggested by Stow's civic-focussed works, that the London merchant class held the Brutian histories particularly close. Munday, like Samuel Daniel, whose *The First Part of the Historie of England* (1612) refutes the Brutian histories, may as usefully be considered an author of historiographic texts as a poet.²⁸ Indeed, Munday's pragmatic approach suggests a perceived market for Brutian works: having been both a playwright and author of antitheatrical works (McMillan and MacLean 4) and a man who "hunted and betrayed Catholics professionally" yet "showed no anti-Catholicism in his hagiographical play on Sir Thomas More" (Griffin 135), Munday seems to have exercised, to put it mildly, a degree of ideological flexibility where his work's marketability was concerned. As such, *A Brief Chronicle*, rather than testifying to an authorial historiographical position, seems to indicate a strong perceived demand for pro-Brutian cultural products.

John Speed's *History of Great Britain* (1611) both rejected Brute as a source of national pride and, significantly, offered a conceptual alternative to the unnerving blank space left in the British Isles' pre-history, turning to the "American experience"

²⁸ Blair Worden, in a study of the interrelationships between early modern poets and historians, states that "the overlap of the two ... was more obvious than the divergence" (75).

(Ferguson 79), and comparing the Romans' descriptions of the ancient British to contemporary accounts of the Native Americans. This was visually reinforced by illustrations in Speed's work which pictured the Native Americans as "naked [and] painted" (79) much as the ancient British had been described, replacing the pagan and Trojan foreignness of the Bruton kings with a new, colonially inflected otherness that must have suggested, uncomfortably, that the Native Americans were to their European colonisers what the ancient British had once been to the Romans. Famously, however, it is Michael Drayton's topographical verse history of the Isles, *Poly-Olbion* (1612) that, by incorporating Bruton narratives alongside marginal prose "illustrations" by a sceptical John Selden, undermined these accounts' claim to historicity even whilst celebrating them. Selden's commentary, in Anne Lake Prescott's striking image, "undoes *Poly-Olbion's* mythology from its margins like acid eating a book from its edges" (309), addressing Drayton's endorsement of Brute with his own view that "I should the sooner haue beene of the Authors opinion ... if in any *Greeke* or *Latine* Storie authentique ... were mention made of any such like thing" (sig. C3r). In this way, *Poly-Olbion* materialised and interleaved in a single object the dissonance experienced by those encountering anti-Bruton arguments. This offers clues regarding the divided historical consciousness with which Jacobean plays such as *King Lear* may have been received, the phenomenon explored in Chapter Three.

Kendrick describes John Speed as "the great antiquary who settled the matter for us" (124). For *us*, perhaps. But texts endorsing the Bruton histories continued to be produced. A little-mentioned Latin verse response to *Poly-Olbion*, published in the same year as that work's extended second edition, was William Slatyer's *Palae-Albion* (1622). Dedicated to James VI and I, Slatyer's work revives the association between the English monarchy and Bruton histories that had endured since at least Edward I's 1301 letter to

the Pope. In 1630, Slatyer published a supplement to *Palae-Albion, Genethliacon*, a pictographic genealogy of the rulers of what Slatyer, with copious inclusivity, terms “Anglo-Scoto-Cambro-Britannica,” or “Great Britain” (sig. A1r). The only monarchs individually represented were Brute and his queen, Innogen, testament to their enduring, even enhanced, value in personifying and sustaining the putative and etiologically endorsed unity of the Stuart kingdom.

In a similar instance of a pro-Brutan position being reinforced in the Caroline era, John Taylor’s doggerel history of Britain, *A Memorial of all the English Monarchs* (1622), added to its 1630 edition a full-hearted defence of Brute’s historicity, concluding “I follow the common opinion ... there was a BRVTE” (sig. B1r). Taylor’s work targeted the gentry and “urban, especially London tradesmen,” although Capp notes that works such as *A Memorial* may also have targeted those unable to afford Holinshed or others (Taylor 67). *A Memorial*’s dedication to the Lord Treasurer, Taylor’s appeals to women readers and the young, along with phrasing that suggests he anticipated his text to be heard as well as read (69-73), show Taylor serving as “a point of contact between the elite and the urban tradesman” (54). In this way, Taylor’s approach to the Brutan histories is useful when considering to whom they might still appeal, and how, in the 1630s. *A Memorial* might be viewed as indicating a resurgence of interest in the Brutan histories in the context of the irenic “cult of peace” that characterised the Caroline court during the early years of Charles I’s “personal rule,” as opposed to the factual peace, which was “contested, controversial and fragile” (Sanders and Atherton 3). Alternatively, it might simply be one work among many that continued to appeal to readerships divided not precisely by social degree, but by textual community.

In 1631, John Weever's *Ancient Funerall Monuments*, an antiquarian survey of English memorials, addressed the question of Brute with specific reference to London, quoting *Poly-Olbion*'s reference to the "enuious world":

Howsoever the Story of *Brute* be denied by some learned Authors, or not permitted but by coniecture; as Selden hath it in his Illustrations vpon this verse of *Michael Drayton*, which now the enuious world doth slander for a dreame. Yet because I finde him, in our Annals, to haue beene buried here in this Citie, of his owne foundation, as both by reason and authority it is strongly argued by a most iudicious Antiquarie of the last age; I think it not amisse to speake somewhat of him (especially) in this place, as the truth of the storie is generally receiued. (f. 374)

Weever appears to be acknowledging the "learned" such as Camden and Speed, perhaps meaning by "coniecture" approaches such as Camden's that allowed for the possibility of Brute's historicity whilst denying that this could be proven through historiography. In turning to "our Annals," Weever, like Higgins and Warner before him, prioritises an outmoded historiographic form, the chronicle, over Selden's modernising scepticism. History could still do the work one required of it, then, with recourse to a preferred "authority". Weever later notes the account of Brute as "the vulgar receiued opinion" that has been brought into question by "many of our learned authenticall writers" (f. 377). In the 1630s, then, a near century after Vergil's *Anglia Historia*, and a half-century after *Britannia*, the "vulgar received opinion" of Vergil's "unschooled common run of men" endured, despite a century of erosion and dissonance. Weever, who had travelled England in his research, notes that belief in Brute is "especially" prevalent in London, home of the

very institutions that, by the Stuart era, remained so closely associated with the Brutian histories. These included the livery companies, the Inns of Court, and possibly the royal court itself, along with a more generalised audience for cheap texts and plays, characterised by the Master of the Revels Sir George Buc, as “the ignorant, and never-understanding vulgare; whose faith (in history) is drawne from Pamphlet and Ballad, and ... the stage” (xxii).²⁹ Buc himself, however, recorded having written dumb shows for a version of *Locrine*³⁰ and, in his poem *Daphnis Polystephanos* (1605) dedicated to James VI and I, framed the accession as a resolution of the “olde, and vnnaturall fewd betweene *Locrine*, and *Albanact*” (sig. B2v), signalling that class-inflected impatience with historical inaccuracy in the playhouses did not preclude sympathy towards the Brutian histories.³¹ Evidencing a Caroline endorsement at the cheaper end of the print market is *A Trve Chronologi of all the Kings of England from Brvte the First King vnto our Most Sacred King Charles Mo[n]jarke of ye Whole Yles* (fig. 1). Published in, or around, 1635, this single-sheet broadside of one-hundred-and-forty-nine thumbnail portraits reproduced in pictographic form the history of the British, and subsequent English, monarchs. Upon reaching its present moment in the 1630s, the *Trve Chronologi* expands beyond its sequence of rulers, concluding not with a king but with portraits of Charles I’s consort Henrietta Maria and their son Prince Charles (b. 1630), the royal heir. This projects the pictographic schema beyond the present monarch into an unbroken royal future.

²⁹ Cited in Griffin 76.

³⁰ Sharpe, *Personal Rule* 659-660.

³¹ Buc’s reference here, of course, may be a formulaic allegorical reference. It is certainly disingenuous. No version of the Brutian histories records a conflict between Locrine and Albanacht.



Fig. 1. The broadsheet *A Trve Chronologi of all the Kings of England from Brvte the First King vnto our Most Sacred King Charles Mo[n]arke of ye Whole Yies* (c. 1635).
Cambridge University Library (Broadside.A.63.5).

The *Trve Chronologi*, then, for such an ephemeral, near-textless document, is a complex and temporally expansive artefact. Appearing within the market for ballads, coranto news sheets, and pictorial representations of newsworthy events and religious themes, *A Trve Chronologi* could potentially bring the Brutian histories to a wider audience than many written texts.³² In its anonymity, its accessibility, and its potential for reaching a wide, even non-literate audience, the *Trve Chronologi* has more in common with the tradition that developed from the prose *Brut* than with Geoffrey's *Historia*. Taylor's *A Memorial* included thumbnail portraits for each British monarch that, whilst cruder, are almost identical to those in the *Trve Chronologi*. Despite the dating of the documents appearing to suggest that *True Chronologi* is in debt to *A Memorial*, this may in fact not be the case.

³² Tessa Watt notes that single-sheet printed images were at the top end of the price range for cheap print (142).

The *True Chronologi* bears a striking resemblance in style, technique, and format to a series of broadsheet chronologies published in Paris around 1614-15 by the stationer Jean le Clerk.³³ The likelihood that Taylor's woodcuts draw upon the *Chronologi*'s more refined brass-etched portraits, rather than the other way around, combined with the earlier dates for le Clerk's analogous prints, suggests that the extant *Chronologi* represents an updated version of a Jacobean original, perhaps re-etching the final portraits to replace James's family with Charles, his consort, and their heir. This notion of pragmatic erasure and updating is supported by a broadsheet entitled *A Brief Survey of all the Reigns of the Several Kings of this Isle* (1674) which reproduces *A Chronologi* exactly but updates the final figure to a portrait of Charles II.

A Trve Chronologi sustains the venerable English habit of equating "England" with Britain, although the reference to "Ye Whole Iles" may have been provoked by Charles I's belated crowning as King of Scotland in Edinburgh in 1633, having frustrated the Scots with eight years' delay (Sharpe, *Personal Rule* 775-76). This period, following Charles I's closure of parliament in 1629, may have seemed, superficially at least, one of renewed harmony and peace. From 1628 to 1630, the assassination of Charles's confidant, the unpopular Duke of Buckingham, Henrietta Maria's first pregnancy and peace treaties with France and Spain centred political life on the monarchy in ways that, for some, may have configured texts such as *Genethliacon* and *A Trve Chronologi* as celebratory. The importance of both Henrietta Maria and the young heir to a renewed sense of present harmony and future security are represented in *A Trve Chronologi* which, like the prose *Brut*, continued to renew itself for each new historical era.

³³ These were collected at an unknown date, cut into sections, and pasted into a book listed as LE.33.36 and kept at Cambridge University Library. Their subject matters include chronologies of the Doges of Venices, kings of France, kings of Spain, the popes, and others.

In its connections to *A Memorial*, the superficially ephemeral *Trve Chronologi* reproduces an account of the Brutan histories that appears unaffected by the upheavals and intellectual revolutions of the early modern era, unless perhaps its production was motivated by a desire to combat scepticism. It is only suggestive as a trace of the tradition of popular and oral historiography I have gestured towards throughout this chapter. Nevertheless, I suggest that the survival of the prose *Brut* in its manuscript and print iterations into the early modern era, and its adoption by households and particular institutions as a narrative from which their own origins could be drawn, attests to segments of the population for whom the Brutan histories remained an etiological *insula* relatively unaffected by erosion from newer accounts or scepticism. It was sustained by recourse to the emotional resonance of tradition and intellectual habit. As Brian Stock notes, “the textual community was not only textual ... one of the clearest signs that a group had passed the threshold of literacy was the lack of necessity for an organising text to be spelt out, interpreted, or reiterated. The members all knew what it was” (91). It is from this paradigm, I would argue, that Brutan drama should be understood as emerging before the accumulating effects of disbelief and erosion are addressed. It is through the lens of the Brutan histories as “history,” then, that I will address the first extant Brutan play: Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville’s *Gorboduc* (1652; pub. 1565).

Gorboduc

Gorboduc, called Gorbodogo by Geoffrey of Monmoth, receives only a single mention in the *Historia*, a comment that serves both to situate him within the succession of Brutan rulers and to state that he “had two sons, called Ferreux and Porrex” (44). Subsequent iterations of the Brutan histories disagree regarding whether Gorboduc split Britain between his sons within his own lifetime, or if they inherited after his death. Norton and

Sackville's play shows Gorboduc dividing the kingdom between his sons in his own lifetime, despite counsel against such an action. However, the accounts of the Brutan histories that would have been available to *Gorboduc*'s authors, as well as their audience and subsequent readers, focus wholly on the warring brothers and the actions of their mother who, once the son she favoured was slain in battle by the other, murdered the survivor in his sleep. This action, and the civil wars that followed the queen's destruction of the line of Brute, are the Brutan histories' principal concerns.

Somewhere between the oldest extant version of the prose *Brut* (c. 1272) and that employed by Caxton for the *Cronicles of Englonde*, confusion developed over the identities of the two brothers, the oldest version noting that "Porrez had an evil heart and wanted, by treason or by trickery, to kill his brother" (95), Caxton that "Ferres had a felons hert and thought thurgh treson to slee his brother" (sig. B2v). Such differences, when placed side by side in the early modern period, may have presented a version of history that, whilst unquestioned in its core historicity, was flexible enough in the details to allow remoulding in the cause of a didactic, theatrical treatment such as *Gorboduc*. Neither is there much agreement over how, or why, the kingdom was divided between Ferrex and Porrex, Caxton noting only that following Gorboduc's death they "werred [warred] to gedre for the land" (sig. B2v), whilst Fabyan's fifteenth-century retelling states that the brothers were "ioyntly made gouernours and dukes of Britayne ... and contynued in amytie a certayne tyme" (sig. B4v). Several subsequent texts repeat this notion of five years of peaceful co-rulership. Fabyan also directly addresses the discrepancy between the two brothers in different texts, meaning he must describe the queen as killing "whether [whichever] of them was lyuyng" by cutting him into small pieces to which, Hardyng adds, she sets fire (sig. D1v). The principal cause of the atrocities in the ensuing war between five kings, or barons, is identified by Hardyng as

“Defaut of lawe” (sig. D2r), a possible trigger for authors at the Inns of Court looking for a historical example wherein the failure of law, as well as succession, might be placed at the centre of a national disaster. These were the principal texts available at the time *Gorboduc* was composed and performed in 1561-2.

Norton and Sackville’s *Gorboduc*, then, simultaneously inaugurates extant theatrical performance of the Brutus histories, and, more famously, English verse tragedy, by staging the annihilation of Britain’s founding dynasty. Much has been made of the political and rhetorical interests and innovations that the play represents. Greg Walker notes that, in adopting blank verse, dumb show and Senecanism *Gorboduc* is “a landmark in English literary history” serving as a “point of departure for ... Renaissance dramatic experimentation” (201). Like Walker, Dermot Cavanagh emphasises *Gorboduc*’s political relevance but makes only passing mention of the play’s rootedness in the Brutus histories (491), thereby, perhaps, eliding important factors in both the play’s composition and potential effects in reception. In examining the dramatisation of these episodes, I wish to foreground these performances as taking place first within textual communities for whom the Brutus histories were, in essence, accounts of the actions of men and women who had once lived and to whom living men and women could be connected by blood and title. Considered in this way, early modern readers were shown that a line of rulers, having founded Britain and governed for approximately seven hundred years – twice as long as the Plantagenets, the longest serving English royal line – was wiped out by fraternal jealousy and filicide. The play suggests that the end of Britain’s founding dynasty was cataclysmic, and yet the Brutus histories were peculiarly vague regarding details. Whilst worrying for historiographers, this was perhaps useful for didactic purposes. No reason other than Ferrex or Porrex’s villainous nature is ever given for causing the dispute, whilst the play stresses the influence of flattering counsellors, a detail that may indicate a

surprising intertextual exchange that highlights the porousness between literary genres. In 1577, Holinshed echoed *Gorboduc* by claiming that the brothers were “prouoked by flatterers” (1577: I, *Hist.Eng.* 22) into conflict. This additional detail in *Chronicles* may be argued to derive from the play itself, suggesting the possibility that a published play, particularly a play associated with Sackville, by then an Earl and member of parliament, could be read as history, consciously or accidentally, by the compilers of a historiographic text.

As previously noted, Thomas Sackville contributed to *The Mirror for Magistrates* (1559), the framing device of which presents the reanimated historical dead recounting their tragedies for the moral instruction of the living.³⁴ Woolf has noted of the oral component of historical transmission that “English writers inherited and exploited the rhetorical practice of reviving the dead for conversation” (“Speech” 183). *Gorboduc*, then, might be placed within a spectrum of historiographical and didactic strategies that allow it to be rendered as innovative within the early modern historiographic, as well as dramatic, genres. Jessica Winston has identified a phase of “intense interest” in the works of the Roman tragic dramatist Seneca in the 1560s and focussed on the universities and Inns of Court, where students translated many of his works and “performed a series of Senecan and neo-Senecan plays” (“Seneca” 30). *Gorboduc* is thus an engagement with British etiology inspired by, and structured according to, a Roman model. In this way, it dimly echoes the relationship between the *Aeneid* and Geoffrey’s *Historia*.

Tragic figures of the British past were resurrected through *Gorboduc*’s 1562 performances. It was shown first at the Inner Temple and a few days later it was, according to the title page of the 1565 quarto, “shewed before the *QVENES* most

³⁴ Berek notes that *Gorboduc* “belongs to the Inns of Court world that generated *A Mirror for Magistrates* and the translations of Seneca’s tragedies” (“Tragedy” 20).

excellent Maiestie, in her highnes Court of Whitehall, the .xviii. day of Ianuary, *Anno Domini*. 1561. By the Gentlemen of Thynner Temple in London” (sig. A1r). The didactic functions of its royal performance are attested by eyewitness accounts (James and Walker, *passim*). These addressed “disrupted succession, the difficulty of attaining concord between monarch and council ... civil war, and the impossibility of choosing a legal successor” (Axton, “Dudley,” 374).³⁵ James and Walker frame the play as presenting “a direct intervention in the political controversy surrounding Elizabeth I’s marriage plans (or lack of them) and the uncertainty of the succession” (109) and, it has been argued, specifically the matrimonial ambitions of Robert Dudley, a reading to which the account in the Beale MS explicitly alludes.³⁶ In doing this, Winston suggests that the play was a means by which members of the Inn “claimed for themselves the authority to counsel the privy council” (“*Gorboduc*” 12). Indeed, the play’s language often insists upon the role of law. In the opening scene, the queen Videna bemoans Gorboduc’s decision to divide his kingdom “Against all Lawe and right” (sig. A4v), suggesting that the ensuing tragic events are rooted in a disregard for law and tradition – legal values that, as shown, may have perpetuated an adherence to Brutus history within the early modern legal profession. Indeed, *Gorboduc* specifies that its resultant civil wars will only be resolved, and peace established, by the great Brutus king and lawmaker Mulmutius Dunwallo (sig. D5v).

³⁵ James and Walker record recollections of the performance from the private papers of Robert Beale, who explicitly associates specific episodes from the performance with political positions regarding Elizabeth’s succession.

³⁶ Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, was believed to have sponsored the entertainments of which *Gorboduc* was a part in order to promote his own matrimonial ambitions towards Elizabeth I. See Doran, “Juno” and Vanhoutte, “University”.

In terms of performance, eyewitness accounts emphasise the visual over dialogue. The diary of London clothier Henry Machyn records that on

The xviij of January was a play in the quen[']s hall at Westmynster by the gentyllmen of the Tempull, and after a grett maske, for ther was a grett skaffold in the hall, with grett tryhumpe as has bene sene. (Nichols 275)

The “grett scaffold” indicates Machyn’s perception of the scale of *Gorboduc*’s visual frame in performance; that is, the physical context into which the performers projected their vision of Brutan history: this was a spectacular, as well as rhetorically sophisticated, event. Complementing this, James and Walker note that the Beale MS focuses almost exclusively on the play’s dumbshows (113). The opening mime contains several striking images: six “wilde men clothed in leaues” enter, the first carrying a “Fagot of smal stickes, whiche thei all both seuerallie and together assaied with all their strengthes to breake” (sig. A2v). The sticks cannot be broken but, in this physical enactment of a familiar metaphor, individual sticks are separated from the bunch by the wild men, who proceed to break them easily, indicating that “a state knit in vnytie doth continue stronge against all force” (sig. A2v). The fact that the opening image of *Gorboduc* consists in a group of wild men dressed in greenery also resonates with the tension that underlies an engagement with Brutan history. *Gorboduc*’s characters might not only be classicised exemplars of noble origins; in their paganism and antiquity, they can also be perceived as primal and barbaric, as their murderous actions perhaps emphasise. The contingencies of theatrical adaptation extend from these framing conventions into the action and characters of the narrative itself.

Gorboduc's alterations to the traditional chronicle accounts include the addition of several counsellors in order to facilitate rhetorical debate. The king's decision to divide the kingdom is enacted within his lifetime, thereby keeping him around long enough to witness the tragic consequences of his decision. Gorboduc's queen, Videna, is foregrounded, as she is the first character to speak following the play's opening dumbshow. Her murder of her son, like all the deaths, takes place offstage, adhering to the play's classical, Senecan model. None of the principal characters survive into the play's fourth act, which brings onstage the British dukes Clotyn, Mandud, Gwenard, and Fergus, each of whom represents a British region and who for "fiftie yeares and more continued in ciuyll warre betwene the Nobyltye" (sig. D4r). It is Clotyn who recounts the fates of Gorboduc and Videna:

The Brother hath bereft the Brothers lyfe,
The Mother she hath died her cruell handes
In bloud of her owne sonne, and nowe at last
The people loe forgettyng trouthe and loue,
Contemnyng quite both Lawe and loyall harte
Euen they haue slayne their soueraigne Lord and Quene. (sig. D4v)

The play's focus on the danger of division for the realm is demonstrated by the king and queen's deaths at the hands of their own subjects. The play's Inner Temple context also reasserts itself once more: the people not only forget truth, love, and loyalty, but "Lawe". The decision to commit the entire final act to events following the story of Gorboduc's family demonstrates the play's positioning within a greater historical schema. The civil wars are triggered by the ambitious Fergus, duke of Albanye, who confides to the

audience that he has “strength in power aboue the best / Of all these Lordes nowe left in Brittain Lande” (sig. D8r). This reminds us that “Brittaine Lande” is not a monolith but, like the wild mens’ sticks, a gathering of more fragile parts.

John Curran has argued that *Gorboduc*, in deviating from its sources, represents “concerted but unsuccessful attempts to fashion a history play out of non-history – to imagine as historical personages characters who never existed” (*Roman* 33). However, reference to the historiographic material, such as writers’ uncertainty regarding the precise roles played by Ferrex and Porrex in triggering civil war, argues that disagreements in detail could be addressed without core historicity being rejected. The historiographic assimilation of spurious material could also be achieved by recourse to the tradition known as euhemerism wherein an apparently fabulous ancient narrative, that of Jupiter or Brute for example, could be accepted as rooted in fact if untenable elements such as magic and pagan divinity were discounted as the elaborations of accumulated tradition.³⁷ *Gorboduc*’s narrative alterations, then, are not necessarily evidence of doubt in the Brutian histories. Supporting this idea, Woolf notes the “widespread practice of inventing speeches for historical characters” adopted by historical writers from Thucydides to the early modern era, and that “such speeches could illustrate the character of an historical personage far more effectively and immediately than could straightforward narrative” (“Speech” 82). Norton and Sackville’s didactic strategy, I suggest, sits within this historiographic tradition. The kinds of speech that appeared in *The Mirror for Magistrates* are employed in *Gorboduc* to build a performed Brutian historiography upon a Senecan model. Therefore, whilst it is reasonable to propose, as Curran does, that the authors or audience of *Gorboduc* might have experienced doubts

³⁷ Euhemerism was central to early modern engagement with the remote past. See Veyne, *passim*; Ferguson, *passim*; and van Es 112-38.

regarding the Brutan histories, evidence of these doubts is not provided by the play's dramaturgy. To support the idea that *Gorboduc* might reasonably be received as historical, Axton notes that whilst the "gods are invoked as a metaphysical frame of reference ... no supernatural intervention occurs to save the realm" ("Dudley" 376). That is, once the theatrical conventions of "scaffold," dumbshow, and chorus are accepted, the world depicted is a political and historical one. This allows *Gorboduc* to be read as a performance in which the audience was positioned as witnessing revived events from their own national story, taking place within a vast chronology within which they might consider themselves situated. That chronology, as the play frequently asserts, is Brutan.

Gorboduc makes frequent references to Brute, or Brutus, condemning as disastrous – misleadingly – Brute's decision to divide Britain between his three sons, asking "how much Brutish blod hath sithence been spilt / To ioyne againe the sondred vnitie?" (sig. B1r). Frequent invocations of Jove, and Videna's reference in the opening scene to the Gods, "whose Aulters I / Full oft haue made in vaine of Cattell slayne, / To sende the sacred smoke to Heauens Throne" (sig. A3r), remind the spectator, or reader, that this is a pagan Britain, able to be conceptualised only through reference to classical texts, with their accounts of animal sacrifice and smoking altars, an orienting device later employed by Brutan plays from *Locrine* to *Cymbeline*. However, the closing lines of the play's fourth act gesture towards a future in which *Gorboduc*'s audience found themselves, and also towards that audience's future:

Blood asketh blood, & death must death requite

Ioue by his iust and euerlasting dome

Iustly hath euer so requited it

These times before recorde, and tymes to come,

Shall finde it true, and so doth present prooffe,

Present before our eies for our behoofe. (sig. D4r)

Here, the Court of Whitehall accommodates a vast temporality reaching from the play's "times before recorde," into the "present prooffe" of the performance, and beyond, into "tymes to come," the possible future, just as *A Trve Cronologi* would gesture beyond its material margin through the figure of Charles I's heir. There were many exemplary episodes from classical and other sources that might be chosen to demonstrate the wickedness of envy, ambition and weak rule, but in presenting a catastrophic episode from the Brutan histories, *Gorboduc* places the audience, and the play's principal addressee, Elizabeth I, squarely within its projected temporalities. This is intensified with frequent invocations of "Britain land," described with nationalist inflection as "comen Mother of vs al" (sig. C1r). Citing Benedict Anderson's notion of "imagined communities," Jacqueline Vanhoutte addresses the play's appeal to British etiology, noting that "*Gorboduc* provides an emotional (as opposed to socio-political) basis" for national feeling (234). That is, by staging Brutan history rather than classical or international narratives, *Gorboduc* personalises the rhetorical within an etiological and genealogical context. As the inaugural moment of English verse tragedy, this may suggest much about subsequent uses of the Brutan histories on the stage.

Conceived for a specific propagandistic function and audience, *Gorboduc*, once published, became accessible to multiple readerships and readings across a wider social range. It received its first edition in 1565, published by William Griffith, and a second in 1570 under the title *Ferrex and Porrex*.³⁸ A high proportion of Griffith's output appears to have been ballads and other forms of popular print. In this way, the textual

³⁸ For a full account of the differences between the two editions see Cauthen.

transmission of historiography from Inns of Court drama into print reveals the tensions implicit in the release of an elite text into the hands of more diverse textual communities. This is demonstrated by the 1570 *Ferrex and Porrex*, published by John Day, the publisher of Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* and a key figure at the "vanguard" of Protestant print since Edward VI's reign (Pettegree). In an epistle to the reader, Day claims that Griffith had surreptitiously received the play "at some yongmans hand that lacked a little money and much discretion, in the last great plage" and was published in a form that was "excedingly corrupted" (sig. A2r). This may be a stationer's typical and strategic belittling of previous editions in order to promote the new; Cauthen notes that Day appears to have been happy enough to use Griffith's edition as his copy-text (231-32). Thus, Day's sense of excessive corruption might be found in the print milieu into which Day felt *Gorboduc* had escaped. In the same year, he included the play in a volume of Thomas Norton's treatises. By reincorporating the work into the textual material of Norton's wider intellectual and political project, and by stressing royal approval, Day's editions assert their legitimacy. In a revealing editorial intervention, Day appears to have been concerned by the following question asked by the counsellor Eubulus in the 1565 edition: "But how much Brutish blod hath sithence been spilt [?]" (sig. B1r). Day amends this to "Brittish bloud" (sig. B4v). Whilst "Brutish" asserts the linguistic connection between the founder Brute and the kingdom he founded, the association of "Brutish" and the meaning of "brute" with which the opening dumbshow's wild men, and pagan antiquity in general might be associated, is perhaps revealed here as an underlying concern for Day who, through these cleansing strategies, reclaims *Gorboduc* for the elite textual community for which it was created. It would be another two decades before Brutian drama would emerge into the more anarchic discourses of public history, wherein its violence and brutality would become more fully realised in performance.

A third edition was published in 1590 by John Perrin, both “annexed,” as the title page terms it, to the *Serpent of Division* by John Lydgate, and in a standalone edition (*DEEP* ref. 61). Perrin appears to have favoured Griffith’s edition; he reinstates the original title *Gorboduc* and, for example, the blood spilled once again becomes “Brutish” (sig. B3v). The address in *Serpent* “To the gentle reader” describes Julius Caesar’s invasion of “Brutes Albion, after called Brittain, and now of late England” (sig. A2r). It describes *Serpent* as an account of Rome’s overthrow and suggests that if the reader “compare our state with Romes,” then England will be found “to be no lesse in danger and dread” (sig. A2r). This framed both the Roman and Brutan histories as parallel historiographic texts warning of present dangers. It is, then, in printed form and in a didactic and historicised context that *Gorboduc* appeared within the explosion of staged history, and playbooks of staged history, that characterised the 1590s. However, as a stand-alone playbook this thirty-year-old play might be indistinguishable in the bookstalls from newer properties. These would have included not only another Inns of Court tragedy of ancient British history, Thomas Hughes’s *Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587), but Richard Jones’s 1590 edition of Christopher Marlowe’s amoral and hyperviolent *Tamburlaine*, a commercial context that John Day may well have considered “brutish”.

The narrative of *Ferrex and Porrex* saw full public manifestation in a play performed at the Rose playhouse around 1600.³⁹ Philip Henslowe’s *Diary* records a series of payments to William Haughton for “a Booke called ferex & porex”.⁴⁰ Bullough has speculated that this lost *Ferex & Porex* “was probably a reworking of the material in *Gorboduc* with ... a less didactic tone, and more action” (319), whilst Martin Wiggins

³⁹ If David Kathman’s dating of *2 Seven Deadly Sins* to 1597-98 is correct, the Rose’s *Ferex and Porex* would have appeared two years or so after the Chamberlain’s Men had performed their own truncated account of the lives of Gorboduc, Videna, and their warring offspring.

⁴⁰ “*Ferrex and Porrex*” (*LPD*).

proposes an original piece by Haughton for which *Gorboduc* may nonetheless have served as source (4: ref. 1244). Either is possible, although it is almost certain, given the emphasis on elaborate stage violence in Elizabethan tragedy, that *Ferex & Porex* would have made spectacular much of the bloody business that in *Gorboduc* takes place offstage and placing the play within a wider repertory of performed history that will be explored more fully through the lost play *The Conqueste of Brute* (1598) in Chapter Two. Performance at the Rose opens *Ferex & Porex* more fully to the wider historiographical textual community gestured towards throughout this chapter. This community, economic and educational differences notwithstanding, may have shared, in grand sweep if not in detail, an account of collective etiology rooted in the Brutan histories. The minimal critical emphasis placed on the power these narratives may have held for early modern playgoers, particularly within London, should emerge as an oversight when these plays are re-situated within the centuries-long tradition of Brutan histories from which they emerged, a tradition that remained embedded within early modern historical consciousness long after the historiographical process of its erosion was underway. The social force of these Brutan origins now established, the following chapter explores what it might have meant for early modern playgoers to consider themselves descended from the ancient Trojans who had emerged, troublingly, from the pagan Near East.

Chapter Two: Materialising Brutan Etiology (1486-1600)

In the previous chapter, I suggested that one effect of adopting the term “Brutan histories” would be to draw attention to the ways in which the figures of British antiquity who founded or gave their names to British regions, cities and rivers, “Brutan founders,” might also come to personify and characterise those places, and that this might influence or inflect perceptions of their dramatic representation. This relationship between founder and place was not simple, however. Brutan founders brought with them sometimes troubling associations with pagan antiquity and the Near East, and the dramatic representation of national and civic foundation seems to have been hard to separate from parallel narratives of division and destruction. Thus, after exploring the earliest records of Brutan figures in performance, this chapter argues that *Locrine* (c. 1590; pub. 1595) presents its Brutan founders as pagans and suicides of Near Eastern origin even as it configures them as providing the source, or “essence” of British regions and topography. *King Lude* (perf. 1594), which would have told the Brutan story of London’s rebuilding and renaming, would have been performed in a context of plague outbreaks in London and as part of a theatrical repertory featuring biblical accounts of civic destruction. These factors perhaps negated or undermined its eponymous hero’s capacity to instil a sense of triumphant civic regeneration. Finally, in examining *The Conqueste of Brute* (perf. c.1598), I argue that the relative absence of Britain’s putative founder in the theatrical record may reflect his role as, paradoxically, a pre-Brutan figure, that he perhaps functioned more as a conduit between the Trojan and Brutan eras rather than as a figure whose conquest narrative evoked British identity. This was, at least, until James VI and I’s

project to “reunite” England and Scotland allowed Brute to be evoked as an analogue for James as a re-founder of Britain. Thus, the performance of Brutus founders confronted audiences not only with embodiments of honourable civic and national origins but with ancestors who, along with the territories they had founded, were not easily separated from their own tragic, pagan, and Trojan essence.

Whilst the performance of history was also a species of early modern historiography, this chapter argues that manifestation through playhouse practice created encounters with figures of Brutus antiquity of a different intimacy to those enabled by reading historiographic texts. To perform the Brutus founders was to animate and embody the founder him- or herself. This also, I suggest, activated interconnections between founder and the place founded, between ancestor and descendent, and created the illusion of diminishing the temporal and cultural gulfs between early modern spectators and their pagan ancestors.

First, I will explore the ways in which early modern theories of essence and origin may have shaped the perception of Brutus founders and reinforced their significance to the perceived nature and wellbeing of places and peoples. Secondly, I provide background for the tradition of performing Brutus founders as synecdoches for particular civic locations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in order to demonstrate the longevity and national scale of the practice, examining the use of these figures and their identification as both founders and transtemporal presences, able to appear within and influence the present. I will then focus on London’s civic performance, and the use of the Brutus figures Corineus and Gogmagog in the city’s pageantry and royal entries: the centrality of giants to these performances argues for a consistent and intertheatrical semiotics of Britain’s foundation.

In the previous chapter I outlined the medieval tradition of Brutan histories and their continued use alongside early modern historiographic texts. This chapter examines the performative manifestations of this tradition, and the ways in which the onstage embodiment of Brutan founders such as Brute, Locrine, and Lud might also have activated not only Brutan textual sources and associations, but the pastoral landscapes and urban topography with which those originary figures were figuratively enmeshed. This thesis is, in part, an exploration of etiological erosion, specifically the ways in which dramatic representations of the Brutan histories may have changed as those narratives' perceived historicity collapsed. However, in order to understand this erosion, the impact and meaning of belief in Brutan etiology must first be understood. Thus, in this chapter I will approach the Brutan histories from the perspective of those spectators for whom they represented the lived past. In the following section, I argue that the textual record of the earliest performances of Brutan founders sees them functioning as the voice and essence of a particular city or place whilst simultaneously presenting themselves as the revived ancestral dead.

Foundations and Etymology

Having focused on the intertextuality of historiographic texts and performance, I will now examine the interconnectedness of performance and civic space, both in terms of public pageantry and urban structures. Key to my approach will be Rothstein's findings that a "sense of the living presence of the source is manifest in the Renaissance treatment of words, things, individuals, and institutions" (332). This presence is associated with "the vitality," and initiating energy of a founder or original, which "shapes the [early modern] period's understanding of history" (332).

Or, more simply: for many in the early modern period, “origin defines essence” (332). Thus, Brute might be seen as determining through his character the essential nature of “Britain,” as it replaced through conquest the “Albion” inhabited by savage giants, whilst also remaining a vital presence within the topography that his founding act defined.

As Holinshed told the story, Brute “commanded this Ile (which before hight [i.e. was named] Albion) to be called Britaine, and the inhabitants Britons after his name, for a perpetuall memorie that he was the first bringer of them into the land” (1587: I, *Hist.* 11). A founder, in giving their name to a territory, could be said to have undergone a metamorphosis similar to that which Holinshed describes as the “translation of mortall men into heauen” (1587: I, *Desc.* 21), by which “he which had any starres or forme of starres dedicated vnto him, was properlie said to haue a seat among the gods” (1587: I, *Desc.* 21). Something similar, if more earthbound, might also be observed in the naming of territories, cities, and countries. Additionally, because each origin has in turn its own etiology, Brute also infused Britain with his own racial typology, that of the Trojans. Britain and Brute were synonymous: etymology could also be historiography. The possible effects of this materialisation, and the way it might feed back into the qualities of topography itself, can be explored further via Jeffrey Cohen’s work on giants in medieval and early modern historiographic texts and romance. Cohen pays close attention to Brute’s conquest of the race of giants inhabiting Britain. The greatest of these giants, named alternately Goemagot, Gogmagog, and other variants, is wrestled by Brute’s mightiest warrior, Corineus, and thrown from a cliff into the sea. Cohen suggests that despite his bodily death, Gogmagog becomes “immortalised as geography, as earth: the place of his death is called Gogmagog’s Leap ... the giant is installed within the system of

language” (35). I suggest that this “immortalisation” in geography, which for Rothstein retains the “vitality of the source,” and is sustained in memory via naming, might be extended to the performance of Brutan founders. Thus, the actor playing Brute in, for example, *Locrine*, or *The Conquest of Brute*, simultaneously embodies the name, or “thing” that is both Britain’s founder, the essence and origin of “Britain,” and the present “earth” of its landscape. This is enacted as the resurrection in performance of the historical dead, a phenomenon described by Brian Walsh as “a dialogue with the dead that is produced through real-time, embodied acts of ventriloquism” (21). As applied to the Brutan founders, this “ventriloquism” reanimated figures situated both prior to, yet present within, the earthy regions they both defined and preceded.

I propose here a performative concatenation of word and place, historical figure and player, antiquity and moment of performance, that is both dense and unstable, and enables multiple and dissonant receptions. Yet, as I will show, this complex, performed synthesis seems at times to be acknowledged as something uncanny and transtemporal, even when Brutan founders were employed in English civic pageantry, when the establishment of new and stabilising relationships between rulers and regional identities was required. I suggest that, despite the apparent diplomatic and conservative purposes of such performances, the extant texts of these encounters reveal ways in which the performance of reanimated Brutan founders may also have carried troubling undertones, undertones that find fuller expression in *Locrine*.

Alexandra Johnston notes that civic pageantry was a “major tool of public propaganda in a period when the vast majority of the public were either illiterate or had received very little education” (21), and that pageantry was often used by civic

authorities to define the relationship between city and monarch (32). Lawrence Manley, writing on the myths of London's founding, defines the theories of origin and essence outlined above in specifically civic terms:

[T]he notion of a founder implied that a city was not the product of organic growth but the result of a single decisive act ... a sacred geometry was laid out at the moment of the city's foundation and fixed its identity for all time.
(*Literature* 143-44)

The Brutian histories, as an extended narrative of origins, were careful to assign to many British kings the foundation of one or more towns or cities. Thus, King Lear was said to have founded Leicester (Stow, *Chronicles*, f. 22). Cities overlooked in the *Historia* often acquired founders in later iterations of the prose *Brut*. Thus, Johnston and Manley's observations on London might also be applied to evidence of the Brutian king-founders being used in civic pageantry throughout England, in ways that emphasise and ennoble the local site and context through association with ancient monarchy. The evidence suggests that, when this occurred, it was a particular feature of civic encounters with new regimes. As such, the civic performance of Brutian founders appears in the records of two royal entries at York and Bristol in 1486, the year following Henry Tudor's defeat of Richard III and the founding moment of the dynasty that would last until Elizabeth I's death in 1603. The new king's progress "was that of a military conqueror" (Johnston 35) through a country where "some of

the supporters of the late and vanquished King were still at liberty and disposed to further rebellion” (Meagher 47).¹

On his royal progress, Henry was frequently greeted with elaborate pageants that addressed the anxieties and tensions underlying the newly forming relationships between the conquering monarch and his new dominions. The focus on Brutan iconography in civic performance during Henry’s progress is, according to the extant archive, unique. When these pageants featured performances of figures representing local etiology and history, these often appear to have been enmeshed with local statuary and topography. At Hereford, Henry was to be greeted by a performer representing King Ethelbert, the sixth-century king of East Anglia and martyr, whose “relics were in the town’s cathedral” of which he was also the patron saint (Attreed 223); at Worcester Henry was presented with a speech from a performer representing Henry VI, followed by two short speeches from the saints Oswald and Wulstan, former bishops of Worcester whose shrines and tombs were present in the cathedral (Meagher 65). This created an immanent interconnection between the historical dead, civic memorial, and the performed dead, placing all three in uncanny proximity. This is of particular interest when considering the perceived historicity of Brutan figures. At York, a permanent statue of Ebrauk, York’s founder and great-great-grandson of Brute, “stood as a boundary-marker at the west end of St. Saviourgate,” and a “1405-8 stained glass image of Ebrauk” is still extant in the city’s Minster, which Henry also visited (*LPD*, “Ebrauk and all His Sons”; Meagher 59). At Bristol, where Henry encountered a representation of the Brutan king Brennus, he passed through St John’s

¹ Henry visited Cambridge, Huntingdon, and Stamford, although these events are not recorded; Lincoln (Meagher 48); Nottingham; York (49; see above); Worcester (61); Hereford (67); Gloucester (68); Bristol (69; see above).

gate, on which are placed statues of Brennus and his brother Belinus, although these may post-date Henry's visit (Fleming 30). Throughout this chapter, and as will be shown with the play *King Lude*, the material, embodied performance of Brutan founders interacted with their perceived presence, both imagined and emblematised in statuary, within civic topography.

At York, the seat of the dynasty Henry had defeated, and whose loyalty to Richard "caused its officials distress" following his defeat (Attreed 219), the civic authorities repurposed the machinery of their annual mystery cycle plays to create a pageant for Henry (Meagher 53). Framing this, the king was addressed by Ebrauk, described as York's "begynner" (REED: York, 1.139; l. 36). Ebrauk presents Henry with the keys of the city, "thenheritaunce of the said Ebrauk" (139; l. 38). But he also declares his own achievements as a conqueror, of ancient France rather than England, and subtly interweaves his – and thus York's – origins with Henry's own, by asserting his right to Henry's "remembrance / Seth that I am prematiue of Your progenie" (140; l. 20). At the beginning of his reign, Henry had accentuated his putative descent from King Arthur in order to strengthen his claim; Ebrauk reminds Henry that Arthur was in turn a descendent of Ebrauk. Ebrauk's temporality is asserted later in the pageant by the figure of the biblical King David, who explains his presence via his having lived at the same time as the Brutan king (Meagher 58). Brutan origins, whilst, or

because, they were “prematuue,” had a currency and historicity that could be supported by figures from biblical, and thus historiographically unimpeachable, time.²

At Bristol, the final stop on Henry’s progress, having proceeded to the town gate, Henry encountered a “pageaunt with great melodie [a]nd singing” (*REED: Bristol* 11; l. x). This began a sequence of pageants designed to highlight “the town’s recent decay and begging him to help restore their prosperity” (*REED: Bristol* xiv). This then made way for a player representing Bristol’s Brutan founder, Brennius, son of Mulmutius Dunwallo, who asserts himself as the voice of the city who had “[c]alled It Bristow In the begynnyng” (11; l. 20). At the same time, Brennius implies a kind of after-presence, that as founder he is both capable of absence, and that this absence is harmful to the city’s fabric and wellbeing: “This Towne left I in great prosperitie,” he tells Henry, but “I haue ben so longe Away / That Bristow Is fallen in to decaye” (11; 31-32). The performed Brutan founder is presented as revenant-like or revived, inhabiting a zone between antiquity and the present moment: where Brennius has been during his absence remains mysterious. His return after “so long” enables him to intercede with Henry on the town’s behalf. At a time of profound national transformation and unease, both York and Bristol initiated and negotiated their local relationships with the new monarch via the public performance of Brutan kings who, as well as being rulers of Britain, were also local figures of origin and foundation.

² The city of Worcester had been involved in recent “treasonous activities” (Meagher 64). Henry was to be met here by a performer representing Henry VI, who made reference to the Tudors’ claim to Arthurian descent (*REED: Herefordshire and Worcestershire* 590). These speeches were prepared and submitted to Henry’s record keeper, but not performed (Meagher 61; Attreed 222).

A passage from a speech intended for Elizabeth I's 1578 entry into Norwich illustrates the Brutan histories' intertextuality, and the ways in which even brief passages of text or performance might throw up dense clusters of association. Elizabeth was to be greeted at "a place called the Towe Close, distant from the Citie" by Norwich's Brutan founder Gurgunt:

King *Gurgunt* I am hight, King *Belins* eldest sonne
Whose yre *Dunwallo* first, the Brittish crowne did weare.
Whom truthlesse *Gutlack* forste to passe the surging seas,
His falshode to reuenge, and Denmarke land to spoile. (sig. B3r)

In the Brutan histories, "Belin" was brother to the Brennius that Henry VII encountered at Bristol. Their father was Mulmutius Dunwallo, the king whose conquests and reforms secured Britain after the civil wars triggered by the action represented in *Gorboduc*. Dunwallo himself would be the subject of a play performed at the Rose in 1598; similarly, a play of "Cutlacke," was performed at the Rose in 1594, with Edward Alleyn taking the title role (Steggle, *Digital* 64). This play may have included the characters of Belinus and Brennius, figures indivisible from Gutlack's narrative in which he kidnaps the wife of Brennius, with whom he is in love. The characters were popular, and may have featured in a play whose possible existence is suggested by a reference to "Belynus. Brennus" just below an entry for the similarly Brutan *Ferrex and Porrex* (*Gorboduc*) in a manuscript catalogue of

playbooks owned by the courtier Sir John Harrington (Add. MS 27632, f.43r).³ Gurgunt, then, represents not only himself but also evokes swathes of Brutan time.

The Norwich entry demonstrates two other useful points. First, that performance is always contingent on environment: although recorded in the published record of the royal entry, it is noted that “by reason of a showre of raine whiche came, hir Maiestie hasted away, the spéech not vttered” (sig. B2v). Second, as Matthew Steggle has observed, Gurgunt’s unperformed presence in Norwich “had a national profile” (*Digital* 69) and could participate in discourses of English and Brutan history beyond its local political function via its London publication in 1578 and its inclusion in the 1587 edition of Holinshed’s *Chronicles*.⁴ That this event only existed in a textual record of *intended* performance speaks to the porous boundaries between historiographic modes. If spoken aloud in a company of readers, as discussed in my introduction, the Norwich entry belatedly becomes a species of performed history. The regional use of Brutan figures to greet dignitaries seems to have persisted. In 1589 a performance was given by unknown players or local performers at the High Cross in Chester. It was named “the storey of Kinge Ebrauk with all his sonne[s]”

³ The inscription, which appears in two short lines above and separate from the central list of plays, is “Ferrex & Porrex quare / Belynus. Brennus”. The Latin “quare” (“why,” or “therefore”) muddies the issue. Is “Belynus” a separate play, or is Harrington comparing the warring Ferrex and Porrex with this similar, if less murderous, pair of squabbling Brutan brothers? In other words, it is possible that “Belynus. Brennus” is not a record of a play but is a historical reference contextualising the subject matter of *Ferrex and Porrex*.

⁴ It was published as *The Ioyfull Receyuing of the Queenes Most Excellent Maiestie into Hir Highnesse Citie of Norwich* (London, 1578).

(MS Harley 2125, f. 43; Wiggins 2: ref. 831). This performance, too, was hampered by heavy rainfall.⁵

The process of “immortalisation as geography” was sometimes invoked to personify a particular location via recourse to its Brutan founder, and these regional founders may also have activated, and been further contextualised through, a wider network of historiographic associations on a national level. However, whilst the English cities examined here seem to have engaged with their specific, and regional, Brutan founders, the Brutan elements of London’s civic pageantry concerned national foundation and origins with reference to the symbolic moment of the Trojan conquest of Britain as a whole. This use of the iconography of national foundation also has the effect of presenting London as a synecdoche for Britain, or England, whilst simultaneously configuring both as territories settled and founded by Trojans of the alien Near East.

For the Anglocentric early modern English, the name “Britain” was often interchangeable with “England,” and for Londoners both terms could be further subordinated to London’s identity as a self-fashioned “capital and epitome of Britain” (Manley, *Literature* 131). London’s public ceremonies often included the presence of giant figures symbolising the Trojan Corineus and indigenous Albionic giant Gogmagog. Corineus was Brute’s ferocious general, of “incomparable strength and boldness” (Holinshed, 1587: I, *Hist.* 9) whose defeat of Gogmagog in a cliffside

⁵ “King Ebrauk,” may have been given to celebrate a visit by the Earl of Derby, and Matteo Pangallo has speculated usefully that Ebrauk, who was recorded in some versions of the Brutan histories as having invaded France, might have been a timely figure for Derby, who had been involved with negotiating peace terms with the Spanish following the defeat of the Armada the previous year (*LPD*: “King Ebrauk”).

wrestling match marked the defeat of Albion's giants and the island's colonisation. In Jeffrey Cohen's words, for many the "Trojan triumph over these bellicose monsters [marked] the birth of the British nation" (31).⁶ The appearance of giants in civic pageantry across Europe was not unusual (Manley, *Literature* 251-52) and seems to have represented "the imposition of culture and authority" upon the primal barbarity that preceded national foundation (Stephens 41; qtd. in Manley, *Literature* 252). In London, these giants are recorded, unnamed, in royal entries as early as Henry V's following the battle of Agincourt in 1415 (Cohen 29). Entries in the *Bridge House Weekly Payment Book*, recording payments to a "carver" William Goos, offer clues to the giants' construction and mobility.⁷ These include a payment for a giant's head (257), for fitting head armour and buying two sets of garments and 16 "hoops" (265), perhaps to construct a hollow body occupied by a performer and light enough to be carried through the streets.⁸ Mobility may be suggested by a payment to two men for "keeping of the giants in the king's coming" (*REED: Civic London* 3.1122); that is, these men may have been operating, or playing, the constructed giants during the

⁶ Holinshed is dismissive of a claim by "*Hanuile* in his *Architrenion*" that Corineus himself was an eighteen-foot-tall giant (1587: I, *Desc.* 9).

⁷ This document is a record of "accounts and rentals that record the management of London Bridge and its estates" (Harding and Wright vii).

⁸ Additional references to the "giants" include payments in 1412 for "staining, painting, linen cloth, plates, and other things for the giant/s" (*REED: Civic London* 3.1103); these suggest a brightly coloured, armoured figure.

pageant.⁹ In August 1554, Mary I entered London with her husband, the Spanish king Philip II. As recorded by John Elder in a letter subsequently published in 1555, “when they came to the drawe bridge,” the royal couple encountered a “fayre table, holden vp with two greate Giautes: the one named *Corineus Britannus*, and the other *Gogmagog Albionus*” (unpaginated). Each giant’s second name seems to make explicit their joint function as a kind of “after and before” of Britain’s conquest. Their presence together invokes remembrance of this process, Gogmagog standing for the primeval Albion, Corineus for classical, Trojan, colonising of Britain. Alexander Samson has argued that the names Corineus and Gogmagog in 1554 were an “invocation of a British myth of origin” in order to assert “English identity” (244) in the face of Spanish incursion-by-marriage. Richard Grafton, author and publisher of the *Chronicle at Large* (1559), was “the alderman principally responsible for these pageants” (245), suggesting that the naming of Corineus and Gogmagog may have been motivated by the familiarity with the Bruton histories associated with London’s textual communities. As with Elizabeth I’s entry to Norwich, the giants’ performance lived beyond its already huge public audience via a reference in the 1570 edition of Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* (f. 1654), embedding a textual record of the performance of Bruton founders within Foxe’s historiography of English martyrdom.

⁹ Giants appear again in the forms of Samson and Hercules, who hung a chain across the path of the visiting Holy Roman Emperor Charles V during his 1522 entry (Manley, *Literature* 223-24). A giant greeted Henry VI upon his entry into London in 1431, and numerous payments are recorded relating to its lavish clothing (*REED: Civic London* 3.1154; 1160-61). However, the description of the giant as a “device” (1154) suggests that this was an immobile construction, rather than the form of hooped, lightweight pageant costume suggested by earlier records.

Elizabeth I encountered Corineus and Gogmagog when leaving London following her royal entry of 1558, this time at the City's western boundary, as recorded in the "diary" of Henry Machyn: "at Tempylle bare was ij grett gyanttes, the one name was Goott-magott a Albaon and the thodur Co(rineus.)" (Nichols 186).¹⁰ Ian Mortimer describes the manuscript's author as "probably the earliest instance in England of a poorly educated man ... recording the history of his own times" (983; qtd. in Hill, *Pageantry* 122), a further example of a London liveryman engaging with the performance of Brutan figures. Machyn's knowledge of these figures' names argues either that these were spoken aloud or in some other way indicated during the event; or that their identity in civic pageantry was familiar to London's textual communities, or even part of national discourse.¹¹ For example, the *REED* accounts for Newcastle reveal payments in 1591 and 1592 "for keeping of Hogmagog this year" (79; 85) and a 1594 record of a payment for "keepinge hogmagoes koate and him self in licknes" (xv). Whilst the Newcastle record may simply represent an accident of historical survival rather than evidence of national associations of Gogmagog with pageant giants, it is suggestive that this record's technical details echo a payment relating to *The Conqueste of Brute*. A reference to the play in Henslowe's "diary," specifically to a payment of twenty-four shillings for "diuers thinges for to macke cottes [coats] for gyants in brvtt" (100), strongly implies that the play staged the wrestling match symbolically memorialised and embodied by

¹⁰ Machyn's manuscript is described as a "diary" by its nineteenth-century editor, John Nichols; however, a possible reference to this document in Machyn's will suggests that he himself described it as his "Cronacle" (Mortimer 986-87).

¹¹ Mortimer has shown that Machyn had antiquarian interests and connections, and may have known Richard Grafton (996).

Corineus and Gogmagog and that the giants provided an opportunity for some kind of spectacle.¹² The playhouse performance of *The Conqueste of Brute*, therefore, may have activated associations not only with familiar historiographic texts, but with the two pageant figures integral to London's performed self-identity and to its permanent iconography. Two large figures of giants, also often referred to as Gogmagog and Corineus, stood in London's Guildhall by at least the 1590s. These may have been those used in the royal entries and Lord Mayor's shows.¹³ In his French language primer, *Ortho-epia Gallica* (1593), John Eliot's character "The Braggart" refers to "Coryneus, of whom you may see the image in the Yeeld-hall of London" (sig. S1r) and a later text, Thomas Coryate's *The Odcombian Banquet* (1611) cites the "Guild hall huge Corinaeus" amongst publicly accessible antiquities and oddities or, in Coryate's view, "toyes not worthy the viewing" (sig. P1r). These manifestations of public history could be contextualised via a wider network of historiographic text, topography and textual community. In pageant and playhouse, they could also be embodied and made to speak. This onstage representation of Brutan founders who might, like Ebrauk or Corineus, approach their audiences as "begynner" and "prematue of your progenie," carried into the moment of performance their role as both "vitality of the source" and immortalised geography.

Jeffrey Cohen assigns to the Guildhall's giants and other apparent archaeological traces of pre-Brutan Albion a "haunting presence-in-death" (59). I suggest that Cohen's term may be usefully appropriated for the performed historical dead in general, but is of particular significance for the personification of the Brutan founders.

¹² In both records relating to the staging of Gogmagog figures, in Newcastle and at the Rose, there is an emphasis on the construction of the giants' "coats".

¹³ Cohen 29-31; Stephens 40.

Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Penniless, His Supplication to the Devil* (1592), which is often cited as evidence to date *I Henry VI* (see, for example, Burns 1), also offers clues to early modern receptions of the performed historical dead. Defending plays against antitheatrical critics, Nashe invokes the exemplary effect of *I Henry VI*'s martial hero, Talbot, and does so using imagery in which the character's onstage embodiment interconnects with the historical Talbot's relic-like and "revived" cadaver:

How would it haue ioyed braue *Talbot* (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and haue his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least, (at seuerall times) who in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding. (sig. F3r)

In suggesting that Talbot would experience great joy knowing that the performance of his death had been wept over by playhouse audiences two centuries after the event, Nashe also invokes something densely polytemporal and potentially disturbing.¹⁴ Talbot's bones are oiled, or "embalmed," by ten thousand weepers, an event that succeeds his reanimation via performance from a body in a tomb to one both "fresh bleeding" and able to "triumphe again". In a preceding passage, Nashe states that in plays of the "English Chronicles" historical figures are "reuied" from

¹⁴ Steggle has suggested, in an argument that is parallel in some respects to that presented here, that the audience's weeping created a "communal act of remembrance linking the spectators both to the actor and through him to the historical original, Talbot" (*Laughing* 86).

the “Graue of Obluion” (sig. F3r). In a study of the medieval belief in revenants, or the revived dead, Nancy Caciola explains how, in cases of spontaneous reanimation

[T]he body [was] usable by any spirit, not just the original human spirit of the deceased. In fact, bodies are often referred to as a sort of clothing in hagiographers' descriptions of spiritual dislocation: entering and exiting the body is like “putting on a tunic” or “shedding a garment”. (12)

This comes close to articulating one implication of Nashe’s formula. In representing the dead, the tragedian also provides a mediating channel between playgoer and “the original human spirit” of the historical dead. Figuratively, the player’s body becomes the “garment” for Talbot’s spirit, just as the player adopts a stage costume and certain mannerisms in order to demonstrate this to the audience. And whilst Nashe admits that the player only “represents” Talbot, we might consider Andrew Sofer’s argument, applied to props, for “the power of stage objects to take on a life of their own in performance” (2). Sofer writes of “seeing the relic revived, the dead metaphor made to speak again” (3). The bones of the historical dead, imagined by Nashe as a relic anointed by spectators’ tears, are also a “dead metaphor,” a relic that speaks and moves again through the player’s body. As Brian Walsh puts it, of “all the forms of history, performance alone supplies a pretence of sensual contact with the vanished past through the bodies that move and speak on stage” (2). For the Elizabethan aristocratic dynasties represented in *I Henry VI* the system of associations triggered by the “dead metaphor” may have been a relatively closed one; only a few then living might have considered Talbot or Edward III as ancestors,

whilst all could – symbolically at least – derive a sense of descent from Brute and his Trojans, a system into which Plantagenet, Lancaster, and Tudor could also be suborned, enmeshed into the more ancient network of essence and topography identified with, and springing from, the Brutus founders. The revived “dead metaphor” of Brute, for example, would also figuratively animate the etymology, essence, and landscape of Britain. This revenant-like, unstable presence is suggested in Gurgunt’s unperformed speech at Norwich.

In the text for Elizabeth I’s entry, King Gurgunt presents himself, in a similar way to Brennius at Bristol, as one who has been hauntingly present yet dormant: “my selfe in person noble Queene / Did hast, before thy face in presence to appeare. / Two thousand yeares welnye in silence lurking still,” but reanimated by Elizabeth’s approach (sig. B3r). Gurgunt, “lurking” within Norwich for two millennia, returns “in person,” and “in presence to appeare,” an unsettling compression of antiquity and the immediacy of bodily presence. An *EEBO* survey of uses of the word “lurking” in early modern print reveals hardly a single positive, or even neutral, use. To cite a single, if influential, text: in the “Bishops Bible” (1568), the eighth and ninth verses of the tenth psalm, which outlines several vices of the “ungodly,” employs the word in several ways that are both typical of wider early modern usage and acutely threatening:

He sitteth lurkyng in theeuish corners of the streates: and priuily in lurking
dennes he doth murther the innocent, he eyeth diligently hym that is weake. /
He lieth in wayte lurking as a Lion in his denne: he lyeth in wayte lurkyng,
that he may violently carry away the afflicted. (“The Psalmes” IIII; sig. A4r)

Almost all uses of the word in early modern print carry these associations of hiding with violent intent, dangerous urban locations (“theeuishe corners,” “lurking dennes”) and wild animals. Gurgunt’s appearance before Elizabeth I carries the unexpected terminology of an ambush. Pursuing this unease it can be asked if, whilst Talbot joys at his reception, others from history would be so happy to, as Nashe puts it, “pleade their aged Honours in open presence” (sig. F3r). What happens when those revived bones are not those of the glorious dead but, as will be seen in *Locrine*, those of invaders, pagans, adulterers, and suicides? Indeed, as I will argue, *Locrine* brings together the tensions and themes discussed thus far. It revives the Brutus figures, principally Brute and his sons, who gave their names to the British regions that would become Scotland, England, and Wales. Yet these are revived in performance only to die violent deaths, often through their own venality. Thus the “essences” they instil in the British landscape at this foundational moment are those of Trojan pagans whose dramaturgical debt to 1580s-90s plays of the Near East such as *Tamburlaine* configure them as potentially disturbing ancestors.

Locrine

Brute – Brutus in *Locrine* - exists uneasily as both a glorious national founder and a warlike invader. The dying Brute is the central figure of *Locrine*’s opening scene, wherein he describes his life and the conquest of Britain, before dividing Britain between his three sons. Thus the founder of Britain dies at the moment of its division, unsettling the nature of his repaltionship with the land he has founded. The play’s opening dumbshow represents Brute as a lion pursuing “a Beare or any other beast”

(sig. A3r). He is described by the onstage narrator, Ate, the Greek goddess of “ruin, folly, and revenge” (Bate and Rasmussen 76):

A Mightie Lion ruler of the woods,
Of wondrous strength and great proportion,
With hideous noyse scarring the trembling trees,
With yelling clamors shaking all the earth. (sig. A3r)

This terminology echoes the language of the violent and “lurking” lion of the Psalms, and, in *Locrine*, Brute is described five times as a “terror” to his enemies, an embodiment of violence and domination. The term is applied to Tamburlaine throughout Marlowe’s two plays; this demonstrates both *Locrine*’s indebtedness to *Tamburlaine* and that Brutus is presented as having been a Tamburlaine-like conqueror, albeit in the service of British glorification. As I will show, this connects Brute with Elizabethan tropes of Turkishness and the Near East.

Like Gurgunt, *Locrine* revives its Brutan founders from over “[t]wo thousand yeares welnye in silence lurking,” and these founders, Corineus, Brute, and their children, are colonisers and alien to Britain. As such, they carry their own complex etiology as manifestations of the “other,” as Trojans originating in the Near East. Walter Stephens argues that the Brutan histories’ account of Gogmagog offers “a fully traditional portrait of the Giant as menacing cultural Other” (40). I suggest that Brute and his Trojans, too, may in certain ways have appeared similarly alien, emerging as they did from geographically remote pagan antiquity. This is intensified in *Locrine*’s tragic narrative, which shows how each of these figures, via founding action and subsequent etymology, becomes both Rothstein’s “living presence of the source” of a

British region and Cohen's "haunting presence-in-death" within that region. The following section will establish *Locrine* as a text that is in several ways typical of the dramaturgical culture of the late 1580s and early 1590s. I will then focus on the effect on *Locrine* of the Bruton founders' Trojan ancestry, and of its playmakers' decision to depart from the historiographic sources by staging five of the narrative's deaths as suicides. I will argue that *Locrine* imagines the founding division of British topography as the assimilation of Near-Eastern "other" and pastoral landscape, and that this is achieved through the performance of suicide.

According to Bruton history, Brute conquered the island of Albion, killed its giants, and renamed it after himself. He founded Troynovant, awarded Britain's south western territory to Corineus – which he named Cornwall – and ended his reign by dividing the rest of Britain between his three sons, Locrine, Albanacht, and Camber. Locrine was the first king of the British territory of Loegria – subsequently England – and was also, according to Caxton, over-ruler "of alle the lande of Breteyn" (unpaginated). Albanacht was apportioned the northern territory, and Camber the western region. Each was named after its new king: Albania, or Albany, for Albanacht, Cambria for Camber. These territories were broadly analogous to Scotland and Wales. These founding events set the stage for Locrine's reign, described here by John Stow:

Locryne ... chased the Hunnes whiche inuaded this Realme: and pursued them so sharply, that many of them with their kyng were drowned in a ryuer, whyche departeth Englande and Scotland. And for so much as the kyng of Hunnes, Humbar, was there drowned, the ryuer is tyll this daye named Humbar ... This king Locryn had to wyfe Gwendolyn daughter of Corineus,

duke of Cornewall, by whom he had a sonne named Madan, he also kept as paramor, the beautiful lady Estrilde, by whom he had a daughter named Sabryne. And after the death of Corineus duke of Cornewal, he put from him the sayd Guendolyn, and wedded Estrylde, but Gwendolyn repaired to Cornwall, where she gathered a great power, and fought with king Locryn, and slue him: he was buryed at Troynouant. She drowned the ladye Estrylde wyth her doughter Sabrine in a ryuer, that after the yong maydens name, is called Seuerne. (Stow, *Summarie*, f. 9v-10r)

Stow's *Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles* (1565) was widely read. Its popularity is demonstrated by the nineteen editions issued between 1565 and 1618. Thus, Stow's account of Locrine's reign might be considered one of the most familiar textual accounts against which a playgoer could compare the action of *Locrine*.

Stow omits to mention that Albanacht was slain in battle by Humber, an event foregrounded in both *Locrine*'s action and on the playbook's title page, which highlights "the warres of the *Britaines*, and *Hunnes* ... and the death of *Albanacht*" (sig. A2r). The story of Locrine, particularly its account of the tragic deaths of Estrild and Sabren, was of "great significance" in the early modern period, being "far better known than the story of King Lear" and coming "second only to the feats of Arthur among the popular inventions of Geoffrey of Monmouth" (Schwyzer, "Purity," 26); this is shown in the treatment given to these episodes in Higgins's *First Parte of the Mirour for Magistrates* (1574), William Warner's *Albions England*, and Thomas Lodge's "Complaint of Elstred" (1593). In the play *A Knack to Know a Knave* (pub. 1594), the English king invokes Locrine's illicit relationship with Estrild as a warning against adultery "[e]uen in the lyfe time of faire *Guendolin*: / Which made the

Cornish men to rise in Armes, / And neuer left till *Locrin* was slaine” (sig. G2r). It is therefore unsurprising that the collaborative and intertextual economies of the London playhouses should generate a play treating this narrative. *Locrine* provides much textual evidence regarding stage tableaux and visual strategies for the performative representation of Brutus origins; the following section will examine these in order to explore what it might have meant to witness, rather than read about, Britain’s originary foundation and fragmentation.

Locrine is unique, being the only extant Elizabethan playbook of the Brutus histories as performed in a public playhouse, and the only extant early modern play representing the foundation of Britain. Yet in other ways it is embedded within the practices of late-Elizabethan drama. The play’s single print edition was published in 1595 by Thomas Creede, whose “prominence as a printer, publisher, and enterer of plays in the 1590s can hardly be overstated” (Syme 28). The title page genre designation of the play as a “lamentable tragedie” follows a typical publishing strategy of the time, the term being used first for Alexander Neville’s translation of *The Lamentable Tragedie of Oedipus* (1563), the influential *A Lamentable Tragedy ... of Cambises* (1570) and, in its running titles, *Titus Andronicus*.¹⁵ The word “lamentable” appears even more widely in mid-1590s playbooks that resist

¹⁵ The title-page of *Titus* describes the play as *The most lamentable Romaine tragedie of Titus Andronicus* (Sig. A2r).

categorisation in terms of temporal or geographical location.¹⁶ *Locrine* is also amongst the many plays drawing a powerful influence from Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (c.1587; pub. 1590).¹⁷ *Locrine*'s title page offers no information regarding theatrical venue or playing company, only that the text has been "Newly Set Forth, Overseen and Corrected by W. S." (sig. A2r). This attribution has caused much speculation regarding Shakespeare's possible involvement as reviser or editor.¹⁸ The question of authorship has been complicated by a copy of the play annotated by George Buc, the Jacobean Master of the Revels. This ascribes *Locrine*, or perhaps another play on the same subject, to Charles Tilney, who was executed for treason in 1586 for his role in the Babington Plot supporting Mary Stuart (Gooch 5), and the play's dumbshows to Buc himself.¹⁹ If Buc's note is accurate, then *Locrine* originated as an Inns of Court piece similar to *Gorboduc*; but even if this is the case, the text as published is manifestly an adaptation for the public stage by a playwright "whose

¹⁶ These are *The Lamentable and True Tragedie of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent* (pub. 1592); *The Spanish Tragedie, Containing the Lamentable End of Don Horatio, and Bel-imperia: with the pittifull death of olde Hieronimo* (pub. 1592); *The Most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus* (pub. 1594); Marlowe's *The Troublesome Raigne and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second* (pub. 1594); *The True Tragedie of Richard the Third* (pub. 1594), includes amongst its advertised events "a lamentable ende of Shores wife"; and Thomas Lodge's *Wounds of Civil War* (pub. 1594) is described on its inner leaf as "The most Lamentable and true Tragedies of Marius and Scilla" (A2r).

¹⁷ Berek cites amongst these Marlowe's own *The Second Part of the Bloody Conquests of Mighty Tamburlaine* (pub. 1590); *The Tragical Reign of Selimus* (pub. 1594); *The Wovnds of Ciuill War* (pub. 1594); *The Battell of Alcazar* (pub. 1594); *Orlando Furioso* (pub. 1594); *Locrine*; and *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (pub. 1599) ("*Tamburlaine*'s" 58).

¹⁸ This speculation is summarised by Will Sharpe (657-663).

¹⁹ The Buc notes were long believed to be a forgery by J. P. Collier. However, recent work on Collier has determined the inscription to be authentic (Freeman and Freeman 2: A26.1).

head was filled with Marlowe and Spenser” (Berek, “Tamburlaine’s,” 69).²⁰ To these can be added *The Spanish Tragedy*’s vengeful ghost, which seems to have influenced *Locrine*’s portrayal of the ghosts of Albanacht and Corineus. The influence of the playhouse is indicated by, for example, a substantial clown’s role, several onstage deaths atypical of the Senecan model followed by Inns of Court tragedies such as *Gorboduc* and the *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (pub. 1587), and *Locrine*’s many links both to *Tamburlaine* and to the *Tamburlaine*-derived *Selimus* (pub. 1594), a debt “extending to whole passages” (Gooch 5).²¹

In terms of playing company, Jane Lytton Gooch, noting that *Selimus* was also published by Creede, favours the Queen’s Men for *Locrine* (32). Roslyn Knutson also hesitatingly attributes the play to the Queen’s Men (103). This is intriguing in the context of McMillin and MacLean’s work on the Queen’s Men as a product of the Earl of Leicester and Lord Walsingham’s attempts to “unify the country” (26) through the “formation of an acting company bearing the queen’s name and performing plays of ... English and Protestant moderation” (32) as it might relate to Protestant enthusiasm for the Brutus histories.²² However, it is hard to detect in *Locrine* a position coherent or timely enough for nationalist or propagandistic uses, and perhaps this reflects its possible origins as an Inns of Court piece written by Tilney, an executed supporter of Mary Stuart, subsequently reworked for the popular stage.

²⁰ The play’s inclusion of a duke, Debon, to rule Devon is taken from *The Faerie Queene* (1590; II.X; f. 328).

²¹ Further examination of this has been made by Donna Murphy, who uses *EEBO* word searches to identify in *Locrine* and *Selimus* words and phrases characteristic of Robert Greene and, in *Selimus*, Thomas Lodge, arguing that the latter play may be a collaboration between the two writers.

²² The editors of *Locating the Queen’s Men* support this view (15).

The heroic Albanacht aside, the play's Trojan characters are poor models for celebrating national or Protestant virtues. Violent and vengeful, many are disloyal to their king Locrine, just as he abandons his dynastically crucial marriage to Corineus's daughter Guendolen in favour of his illicit relationship with the foreign Estrild. Locrine's final defeat by Guendolen prompts an epilogue that stands as a rather anxious and simplifying equivocation on the play's stated theme: "[a]nd as a woman was the onely cause / That ciuill discord was then stirred vp, / So let vs pray for that renowned mayd / That eight and thirtie years the sceptre swayd," meaning, of course, Elizabeth I (sig. K4v). The reference to thirty-eight years suggests the epilogue has been updated for print or is an addition on Creede's part, perhaps seeking preemptively to strike a distinction between moral and monarch. Yet *Locrine* appears to offer no coherent political allegory beyond a generic demonising of foreign invaders – popular in the post-Armada years – and, as observed in *A Knack to Know a Knave*, sensitivity to the destructive effects of royal lust and oath-breaking. *Locrine* is in fact much more a product of its dramaturgical and literary environment than a coherent work in itself. Gooch notes that "*Locrine* contains numerous borrowings from contemporary poetry and drama, published in the period 1590-1594" (5) rendering the play typical of its moment and challenging attempts at attribution in terms of authorship or repertory.²³ The present study engages with the early modern textual communities through which the Brutus histories circulated and, as such, I suggest that *Locrine*, a text that swims relatively freely through the ocean of possible authors,

²³ Will Sharpe offers the most recent and comprehensive survey of debates relating to *Locrine*'s possible authorship, listing in one paragraph thirty scholars' separate theories and opinions (662).

playing companies and publishers' intentions in the mid-1590s, be approached as a function of its historiographic themes and wider dramaturgical moment.

Locrine's dumbshows are extrapolated onstage throughout, by Ate, immediately situating *Locrine's* cosmology within the pagan, classical antiquity to which Geoffrey's *Historia* had connected British origins. This is enhanced by the dumbshows, whose figures are drawn almost exclusively from Greek myth.²⁴ *Locrine's* characters, products of the classical Near East, metamorphose and are in turn metamorphosed by the landscape they have settled. The Trojans become British, Albion becomes Britain. Ate had served as a prologue before, in George Peele's *The Araygnement of Paris* (pub. 1584), a play addressing the origins of the fall of Troy and therefore, obliquely and coincidentally, providing a kind of prologue to *Locrine's* portrayal of those Trojans' ancestors. Ate opens Peele's play, coming "from lowest hell," brandishing "the bane of Troie" (sig. A2v), an apple that Ate leaves to be discovered by the goddesses Juno, Pallas, and Venus, who argue over the identity of the "most beautiful" to whom it is addressed (Wiggins 2: ref. 751), selecting Paris as the judge and thereby triggering Venus's award to Paris of the world's most beautiful woman, Helen, the event that led to the Trojan wars and thus, in Brutus history, to Brutus's discovery of Albion. Ate is configured as the activating deity of Trojan doom. In *Locrine* she revives this role in order to oversee the ruin of the Trojans' Brutus ancestors. This interconnection suggests a great deal about the tonal resonance Ate's presence in *Locrine* may have had for audiences reflecting upon the earliest origins of Britain's Trojan founders.

²⁴ These include Perseus and Andromeda (sig. C2r); Hercules (sig. G1v); Jason, and Medea (sig. H4v).

Following Ate's induction, *Locrine*'s opening scene presents the dying Brutus as he recounts his past adventures and divides Britain between his sons. In the short term, this assures a secure succession by pledging Locrine to Guendolen, the daughter of Corineus and, in the longer term, establishes the fracture lines of British topography and succession that will, again and again, be the subject of Brutan drama. The play then recounts events much as they are outlined in Stow, with one or two notable additions and alterations. There is a clown, Strumbo, who moves in and out of the action and whose subplot seems to parody the history's tragic developments (Gooch 10). The warlike Corineus is given a son, Thrasimachus, whose actions have the effect of minimising Guendolen's agency in the Cornish rebellion against Locrine or, equally, minimising the queen's role in killing a monarch – Locrine – and Sabren, who might represent an alternative heir, perhaps a sensitive public issue following Elizabeth I's 1587 execution of Mary, Queen of Scots. A duke, Debon, Spenser's invention, is imported from *The Faerie Queene* and awarded the territory of Devon (1590; II.X; f. 328). But there is one way in particular in which *Locrine* diverges from the Brutan histories and its poetic sources. In these sources, the deaths of Albanacht, Humber, Locrine, Estrild and Sabren are all recorded as either deaths in battle or, for Estrild and her daughter, murder by drowning. In *Locrine*, all of these are re-imagined and staged as suicides. Before addressing this, in the following section I will first consider what the Trojan origins of Brute and his cohort may have meant for an early modern audience's perception of their colonising, pagan ancestors. I will then highlight the ways in which *Locrine* can be distinguished from post-*Tamburlaine* plays concerned with foreign conquerors and exotic landscapes, in adopting a language that looks inland to Britain's pastoral topography or insular landscape. Finally, I will utilise this context in returning to *Locrine*'s staging of the Brutan

founders' "immortalisation as geography" as a synthesis of insular landscape and suicide.

In *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare*, Gil Harris explores notions of what he calls "palimpsested time" (1-25), arguing that the historicist tendency to situate objects and events within synchronic space elides the complex and destabilising ways in which the past interacts with the present. One of Harris's themes is that the "matter" examined, in which he includes John Stow's report of Hebrew-inscribed masonry uncovered during the rebuilding of London's Ludgate, expresses its antiquity in part through associations with the Near East. As I will show, these associations may also have triggered thoughts of Britain's Trojan founders, who represented "the bridge that linked England directly to the mythical Mediterranean of Homeric and Virgilian epic" (Teramura 128). Several plays appearing in the same theatrical moment as *Locrine* utilise these Trojan origins for a number of effects. George Peele's *Edward I* (pub. 1593) stages Britain as a network of territories in conflict: the Wales of Lluellan, Edward's England, and Balliol's Scotland. Edward and his followers are described as "Albions Champions, / Equiualent with *Trotans* auncient fame" (sig. A2v), whilst Edward's rival, Lluellan, claims Brute for the Welsh, described as "true *Britaines* sprong of *Troians* seede" (sig. C3r). Similarly, in Thomas Hughes's *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (pub. 1587), an Arthurian Inns of Court play, a messenger describes Britain as "the stately type of *Troy*, / And *Brytain* land the promist seate of *Brute*" (sig. B2v). This is echoed in Arthur's reference to "stately *Brytaine* th'auncient tipe of *Troy*" (sig. D3r). In both cases, the Trojan inheritance is invoked in the context of martial excellence and international reach, all deriving from the source, essence, or "type," of Troy. That is, to be made in the image of Troy, of Brute, is to be typologically descended from the heroes of the

classical world. *Locrine*'s characters, tellingly, refer to themselves only as "Brittains," and are named as Trojans only by Humber and Brutus, when discussing his antecedents. This anchors these characters as Brutian founders but also perhaps serves to suppress a degree of unease. Teramura, referencing *Gorboduc*, notes a troubling aspect of Trojan origins:

In [*Gorboduc*] Trojan descent is not a claim to national prestige but a curse: the fall of Troy is not a typological antecedent to be redeemed, but a national trauma that haunts and indeed threatens the present. (140)

This sense of a curse is amplified by Ate's framing presence as the initiator of Troy's downfall. *Locrine* is both a Brutian play and, according to its title page, a "lamentable tragedy," that identifies a further aspect of Trojan ancestry. Bemoaning Albanacht's death, Locrine invokes the name of "aged *Priam* King of stately *Troy*, / Graund Emperour of barbarous *Asia*" (sig. A4r). This, as with so much else in *Locrine*, echoes *Tamburlaine*, in which the phrase "emperour of Asia" (sig. B1r), appears five times. But Locrine's formulation makes explicit an association with Troy and early modern English notions of the "barbarous" Near East. As Andrea Cambini noted in his *Two Very Notable Commentaries* (1562), it was understood that the early modern Ottoman Empire incorporated "those partes where the citie of Troy once was" (sig. A1r). To invoke ancient Troy, then, was also to invoke a people whose blood and homeland were now associated in complex ways with the putative enemy of Christendom. So it is to "barbarous *Asia*" that I look in order to complicate the possible meanings and associations Trojan ancestry and origins may have held for early modern proponents of the Brutian histories.

At the beginning of his *First Parte of the Mirour for Magistrates*, John Higgins, adopting what Paul Bruda calls “the hoary tradition of the dream frame” (10), describes himself falling asleep whilst reading the original *Mirour*. Awaking and encountering a Virgil-like figure, Morpheus, Higgins is led “into a goodly hall / At th'ende wherof there seemde a duskish Ile” (sig. A2v) wherein he encounters the revenants of the Brutans dead:

Men mighty bigge, in playne and straunge atyre:

But some with woundes and bloud were so disguisde,

.....

And eke their faces all and bodies were

Destainde with woade, and turkish berds they had,

On th'ouer lippes moutchatoes long of heyre:

And wylde they seemde as men dispeyring mad. (sig. A3r)

Higgins's miserable Brutans seem to embody the themes of haunting and partial resurrection explored above, whilst their “turkish berds” and woad-smeared bodies present them as both oriental and British. The woad derives from Roman accounts of first contact with British tribes (Curran, *Roman* 158), but the “turkish berds” perhaps suggest the Trojan, Near-Eastern origins of Brutus's line. In a materialist study of facial hair as a stage prosthetic, Will Fisher notes that “Protestant preachers often explicitly promoted bearded masculinity” (99). Yet the “turkish berds” and “moutchatoes” with which Higgins endows his Brutan characters seem to gesture elsewhere. Higgins's spelling of “moutchatoes” is unique in the records of sixteenth-century English print available on the *EEBO* database, but the word “moustache,”

with any spelling, is almost as rare, and appears primarily in contexts relating to Turkishness, villainy, and ancient Britain. Nicolas de Nicolay, in his *The Nauigations, Peregrinations and Voyages, Made into Turkie* (1585), reports that the Turks “suffered no haire to grow, but only the moustaches betwixt the nose & the mouth” (f. 125). One of the dedicatees of *The Nauigations* was Sir Philip Sidney, whose *Arcadia* features a villain, Zoilus, “turning vp his mustachoes” during an act of wickedness (f. 169). Similarly, a translation of Tasso’s *Godfrey of Bulloigne* (1600) describes a villain, Alecto, as one “[w]hose cheekes were bloodlesse, and whose locks were hore, / Mustachoes strouting [sprouting] long, and chin close shaue” (f. 160). Again, moustaches indicate a sense of antiquity, Turkishness, and villainy. And there is a description, in Richard Knolles’s *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603), of Selimus I, the tyrannical Turkish ruler and subject of the eponymous play that shares passages with *Lochrine*:

But in Selymus his sterne countenance, his fierce and pircing eies, his Tartar-like pale colour, his long mustachoes on his vpper lip, like bristles, frild back to his necke, with his beard cut close to his chin, did so expresse his martiall disposition and inexorable nature, that he seemed to the beholders, to haue nothing in him but mischiefe and crueltie. (f. 516)

But perhaps the most intriguing use of this rare word appears in Thomas Hariot’s *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1590). To illustrate that the ancient British were as “barbarous” as the native Americans encountered in Virginia, Hariot gives a description of an ancient British tribe who “did also wear longe heares, and their moustaches, butt the chin wear also shaued” (unpaginated).

Some combination of this moustached antiquity combined with classicised Britishness seems suggested in part by the sixteenth-century statues of a moustached King Lud and his sons that once stood upon Ludgate, whose hair is long, as in Hariot's description (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Statues of King Lud and his sons. These one stood on the inner façade of Ludgate, facing east. They are now displayed at the church of St Dunstan-in-the-West, Fleet Street, London. Photo: Gilchrist, 2016.

In these quotes, English colonialism, British victims of Roman incursion, Turkish otherness and villainy interconnect in ways that complicate *Locrine*, which itself includes a reference to “the wealthie mines found in the bowels of *America*” (sig. B2v) that is anachronistic to its ancient British setting yet sensitive to early modern colonial narratives. Those characters in *Locrine* who would be, to paraphrase Holinshed, “translated” into the British territories also evoke both ancient “barbarous

Asia” and contemporary Turkishness, a characteristic sometimes connected in surprising ways to the English and Protestantism.

Turkish and oriental plays and characters appear frequently in the late 1580s and early 1590s. *Tamburlaine* triggered a fashion for exotic locations and eastern despots and conquerors in plays such as *Selimus* and *The Battell of Alcazar*. *Locrine* participates in this trend through its presentation of Brute as a “terror” alongside its Scythian invader, Humber. Daniel Vitkus names several characteristics of the “Turk” as understood by the early modern English, including “aggression, lust, suspicion, murderous conspiracy, sudden cruelty masquerading as justice, merciless violence rather than ‘Christian charity,’ wrathful vengeance instead of turning the other cheek” (2), all behaviours in which *Locrine*’s characters might be argued to indulge. *Locrine* himself embodies many of these vices, transforming from a noble young king to a lecherous and paranoid despot, exiling his queen, replacing her with his lover and threatening with death anyone who “seekes by whispering this or that, / To trouble *Locrine* in his sweetest life” (sig. I2v). The only key character who doesn’t at some point call for revenge is the clown, Strumbo. This combination of putative Britishness and “Turkish” intemperance may have seemed incongruous, even insulting, given the Brutal histories’ frequent utilisation in the cause of English national aggrandisement, particularly because, for “London theatregoers, the Turk was not an imaginary bogey” (Vitkus 3) but a complex and topical cultural figure.

Elizabeth I had established diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire in 1580, partly, as Matthew Dimmock explores, due to a “willingness in the post-Reformation environment to express the national identity and its allegiances in opposition to the over-arching power of Catholic Spain” (3). Dimmock shows that the Spanish authorities often referred to the English as “turks” and that by the 1590s

“[a]ttacks upon Elizabeth and her realm began to centre exclusively upon relations between England and the Ottoman Empire” (163). Conversely, there was a Protestant tradition going back to Martin Luther of parsing the Pope and the “Turk” into two faces of the same satanic threat (Vitkus 8), a tradition that reached John Foxe, who could not decide “between the Turk and the Pope as the ultimate expression of Antichrist” (Penny 256; qtd. in Dimmock 78).

In 1594, a unit of Spanish ships carried out a series of raids on Cornish towns. The leader of the expedition, Don Carlos de Amezola, in his record of the attacks, claimed to have “burned a mosque” (Dimmock 198). Dimmock suggests that Amezola’s association of an English church with an Islamic structure “reflects ... England’s relationship with Spain and their perceived association with the Ottomans” (199). However, Amezola’s conflation also conceptually places an Islamic structure, the mosque, upon Cornish soil, ground believed to have been named after the Trojan Corineus, co-founder of the Brutan dynasty, through “the immortality conferred by place names” (van Es 41). In these ways, the Ottomans represented a dissonant combination of ally, antichrist, and geopolitical threat, and were one of the principal means through which popular entertainment forms could be rendered exotic, titillating, and transgressive. All of this, I suggest, feeds back into *Locrine*’s representation of the ways in which its Trojan conquerors interact with, and are finally absorbed by, the British Isles’ insular landscape.

Whilst the group of post-*Tamburlaine* plays to which *Locrine* belongs utilises the language of exotic locations, non-Christian peoples perceived as violent and sensual, *Locrine* roots its characters and its wars in Britain’s insular landscape. In *Selimus*, the character Bajazet uses the globalising language of conquest, complaining that “Ay, though on all the world we make extent, / From the South-pole vnto the

Northren beares, / And stretch our raigh from East to Western shore” (sig. A3v), there will be no ending to his cares. This geographical vastness is dramaturgically manifested in Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge’s Old Testament play, *A Looking Glass for London and England* (pub. 1594). The opening scene features an astonishing spectacle in which “Radagon with Remilia, sister to Rasni, Aluia wife to Paphlagon, and other Ladies, bring a Globe seated in a ship” (sig. A3v), materialising a post-*Tamburlaine* obsession with vast distances and alien regions and peoples, as well as a sense of the world as an appropriable and ownable assemblage of regions and territories. As dramatic types deriving in part from *Tamburlaine*, and as pre-Christian pagans, *Locrine*’s characters relocate these tropes to a Britain that might be considered by playgoers as temporally, if not geographically, “barbarous” and exotic. And it is in contrast to the post-*Tamburlaine* plays’ international discourse that, in *Locrine*, the language of place and environment evokes both pastoral and romance, looking inland, to the fields, mountains, and rivers that will become defined, via etymology and etiology, by the play’s alien, Brutan founders. Viewing Britain for the first time, Estrild describes the landscape:

The plaines my Lord garnisht with *Floras* welth
 And ouerspred with party colored flowers,
 Do yeeld sweet contentation to my mind,
 The aierie hills enclosd with shadie groues,
 The groues replenisht with sweet chirping birds,
 The birds resounding heauenly melodie,
 Are equall to the groues of *Thessaly*,
 Where *Phaebus* with the learned Ladies nine,

Delight themselues with musicke harmonie,
 And from the moisture of the mountaine tops,
 The silent springs daunce downe with murmuring streams,
 And water al ye ground with cristal waues,
 The gentle blasts of *Eurus* modest winde,
 Mouing the pittering leaues of *Siluanes* woods,
 Do equall it with *Tempes* paradise,
 And thus comforted all to one effect,
 Do make me thinke these are the happie Iles,
 Most fortunate, if *Humber* may them winne. (sig. C3r-v)

Estrild inaugurates a strategy within *Locrine* of river and landscape imagery, but as the play progresses this pastoral language of topography soon becomes contaminated with imagery of slaughter and drowning.²⁵ Albanacht declares he will pursue the invading Scythians until “all the riuers [are] stained with their blood” (sig. D2r). A description of an encamped army is interspersed with images of “murmuring riuers” that “slide with silent streames,” of knights “[f]etching carriers along the spacious plaines” (sig. D2v). The Scythian Humber prepares for battle with pastoral references to “*Abis* siluer streames / That clearly glide along the *Champane* fields, / And moist the grasie meades with humid drops” (sig. E3r). In *Locrine*’s staging of Britain’s foundation, the alien coloniser, both Trojan and Scythian, collides with pastoral landscape. But the integration of the “other,” via the etymological strategy by

²⁵ Monica Matei-Chesnoiu, in *Geoparsing Early Modern English Drama* (2015), is the only critic I have found to identify and prioritise *Locrine*’s obsession with rivers. Her formulation of the play’s approach as “river personification” (102) is close to my own.

which name and origin determines essence, is ultimately fulfilled via the performance of five suicides. This dramaturgical innovation upon the Brutus histories further darkens the account of Britain's foundation. This is arguably exacerbated by attitudes to suicide in early modern England, where self-killing was both taboo and illegal. For example, a suicide could not be buried in consecrated ground. I argue that this detail disturbs *Locrine*'s integration of landscape and Brutus founder.

Richard Sanderson, in a study of early modern stage suicide, observes that a suicide's "last 'communication' may include an image - consciously fashioned by the suicide - to be left behind in the minds of the suicide's survivors" (203). If playgoers might be included as the "survivors" of a suicide as portrayed in performance, then attentiveness to the "consciously fashioned" images of suicide in *Locrine* may tell us something about the play's possible effects. Like tropes of the ancient Near East, however, themes of historical suicides would also have invoked contemporary preoccupations. Macdonald and Murphy's study of early modern suicide outlines the cultural conflict: on the one hand, the Reformation had "intensified religious hostility to self-murder in England" (2), whilst "[h]umanist intellectuals were inescapably aware of Roman customs and Stoic arguments in defence of suicide, and these views were given greater currency in the literature of the age" (86). The suicides of notable classical heroes were well-known (87).²⁶ Thus, as pagan characters emerging from the

²⁶ Evidence of plays depicting Roman history at the time of *Locrine* (c. 1590), rather than historiographic texts or poetry, is sparse. *Titus Andronicus*, whilst published a year before *Locrine*, was, according to Henslowe, also first performed in that same year (Foakes, *Henslowe's* 21) therefore probably post-dating the Brutus play, which is usually dated to c. 1590. *The Wounds of Civil War*, dated by Wiggins to 1587-89 (2: ref. 802) was, in 1595, the only published playhouse text to depict Roman history.

same classical antiquity as ancient Rome, *Locrine*'s suicides might have been understood as Stoic and therefore, in their way, exemplary.

Folk tradition and the law, however, contradicted this, and evidence of superstitions relating to suicide might cast light on the Brutan founders' possible subtexts of "haunting" and "lurking". As shown in *Hamlet*'s portrayal of Ophelia's funeral (Q2, 1604; sig. M4r), a suspected suicide could be excluded from the comforts of Christian burial. Punishments for self-killing also extended to the suicide's family and heirs. Goods, leases, and money were "forfeited to the crown" (Macdonald and Murphy 15), and these laws were enforced with particular rigour in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (116). The corpse might be carried "to a crossroads and [thrown] naked into a pit" with "[a] wooden stake ... hammered through the body, pinioning it to the grave" (15). This punishment is reminiscent of earlier medieval practices where suicides "were commonly disposed of in rivers ... banished to parts unknown, so that their corpses might not become revenants" (Caciola 30). Whilst this account is "untimely" – Caciola is describing practices recorded many years before the 1590s – it is possible that the early modern burial methods described above bear witness to the survival, on a ritual level, of suicides as the "dangerous dead," or potential revenants. Eric Langley, in a study of suicide tropes in early modern literature, paraphrases Hamlet in a digression on the punishment given to suicides in Dante's *Inferno*: "The self-slaughterer dreams of liberation into infinite space, but is bound to bad dreams" (195). Dante's suicides are, like Ariel in *The Tempest* (TLN: 404), bound into the trunks of trees, welded into agonising materiality. This is an evocative and painful image when considering the "immortalisation of geography," and themes of etiology and essence explored above. I will now apply these to *Locrine*'s "consciously fashioned" (Sanderson 203) stage images of suicide.

Locrine's clown, Strumbo, first appears in the play's fourth scene, comically lovelorn and contemplating suicide: "*Strumbo* kill thy selfe, drowne thy selfe, hang thy selfe, sterue thy selfe" (sig. B4v). In this short sequence, he foreshadows *Locrine's* five suicides, two of which are by drowning and one of which is, if not suicide by starvation, Humber's despairing response to starvation. Albanacht is first to take his own life, stabbing himself to avoid capture by the invading Humber. Albanacht is a heroic, martial figure, perhaps comparable with Talbot in *1 Henry VI*. His suicide appears valiant, infusing his territory of Albania with his rough, martial courage.²⁷ A further parallel for Albanacht might be found in the Roman figure of Young Marius in *The Wounds of Civil War*: overpowered in battle, Marius takes his own life onstage. This would seem to position Albanacht as a Stoic Roman hero. The two deaths are both interpolations by the playwrights upon their source materials, but in other respects they are very different. Marius dies mourning that the tyrant Scilla has created a "world dispoyle of vertue, faith and trust," and pleads for his allies to kill Scilla to preserve the state, for "gouernance is banisht out of Rome" (sig. I1v). His concerns are political and, in promising to show "a constant Romane die" (sig. I1v), his suicide is Stoical. Conversely, Albanacht focuses his final words on personal glory, railing against "Iniurious fortune," promising to "finde her hateful mansion" (sig. E1r). This classically inflected language of glory and honour is closely allied with that of *Tamburlaine* and the plays it influenced. Hadfield argues that *The Wounds of Civil War* may predate *Tamburlaine* ("Thomas Lodge," 911), and one certainly influenced the other. This is visible in both plays' spectacular use of human-

²⁷ Albanacht and Corineus both return onstage following their deaths, as ghosts calling for revenge (sig. G1r; I4r). Berek cites this in his description of *Locrine* as a "fusion" of elements from *Tamburlaine* and *The Spanish Tragedie* ("*Tamburlaine's*" 68).

drawn chariots. However, it was “*Tamburlaine*, not Lodge’s play, that was remembered” (Wiggins 2: ref. 802), at least in terms of the evidence represented by those plays selected for publication in the 1590s. The suicide of young Marius is the dramatist’s addition to the historical account of the wars between Sulla and Marius (Hadfield, “Thomas Lodge,” 96), raising the possibility that Lodge was capitalising upon an earlier, lost, instance of suicide as a stage effect.²⁸ Thus Albanacht’s suicide, comparable with an invented instance of Roman Stoicism, is expressed in Tamburlain-like, Near-Eastern, terms of passionate vainglory rather than young Marius’s principled, politicised despair. Records of playhouse repertory and practice are too scant for us to know whether the suicides-in-battle of Young Marius and Albanacht were innovations or building upon an established trope. Nonetheless, Albanacht’s suicide presented its audience with a death that was heroic in its classicised context, spectacular in its Tamburlainian rhetoric, yet troubling in that it stages the founding moment of Albany, later Scotland, in terms of military defeat by invading barbarians, feeding the landscape with a suicide’s blood.

One of *Locrine*’s most acute compressions of founder and landscape is embodied in Humber who declares that a river’s “siluer streames ... shall be agnominated by our name / And talked of by our posteritie,” wishing the waters red with his enemies’ blood (sig. F1r). Silver streams flow throughout *Locrine* and between its characters, punctuating its uneasy pastoral. Camber evokes the Iscan,

²⁸ As noted, *Wounds of Civil War* is the earliest extant playbook of a playhouse drama depicting Roman history. Of earlier Roman plays catalogued by Martin Wiggins, only a 1582 Oxford University play, *Antony and Cleopatra* (2: ref. 722), and Mary Herbert’s 1590 translation of *Antonius* (3: ref. 865; pub. 1592) can confidently be said to have included suicide.

where “lightfoote faires [fairies] skip from banke to banke” and which is also the site of his encamped army (sig. E4v), and the silver streams of the river Lee flow above a “curious” subterranean jewelled grotto Locrine builds to hide his lover Estrild (sig. H3v). In performance, Humber would have personified imagery of rivers and violence. He is described as “arm'd in azure blew” (sig. D2v), with ensigns as “banners crost with argent streames” (sig. G1r); that is, vivid blue armour or costume, coupled with silver banners suggestive of rivers. These martial accoutrements, whilst barely mentioned in the playtext, could be highly visible as props in performance, waving in the air so as to mimic rippling or flowing water. This insistently riverine presentation pre-echoes Humber’s metamorphosis, or “translation,” into topography via his drowning in the river that receives his name. In the Brutus histories this founding action is undertaken by the victors over Humber, who is driven into the river during battle. In *Locrine*, Humber drowns himself after seven years’ near-starvation in the British wilderness. Humber’s self-drowning itself, however, is unprecedented, according to the available evidence, as a stage effect. Echoing the Humber of the *Historia*, Muly Mahamet in *The Battell of Alcazar*, having also scavenged in the wilderness, is thrown from his horse and drowns in a river offstage (sig. G1r-v), another way in which *Locrine*’s characters might be aligned with stage figures of the contemporary Near East. Yet the despairing Humber’s decision to “Fling himselfe into the riuer” (sig. H4r), as the stage direction puts it, may have intensified the moment at which a foreign, barbaric invader, previously armoured in azure and waving a silver streaming banner, vanishes into, and through “translation” becomes, the silver streams of a British river. This suicide leaves the stage briefly empty of life, the next entrance being the ghost of Albanacht, whose cry of “leap earth, dance trees”

(sig. H4v) calls for Humber's death to be physically celebrated by the landscape in which he has drowned and through which he will be immortalised.

At the play's climax, the embattled lovers Estrild and Locrine kill themselves with Locrine's sword. The suicides of a defeated martial hero and his foreign lover – previously his rival's consort – whose erotic allure has estranged him from dynastic bonds, would have presented obvious parallels, whether playhouse precedent existed or not, with the readily available print accounts of Antony and Cleopatra. Estrild and Locrine are described in death as “Clasping each other in their feebled armes, / With louing zeale, as if for companie” (sig. K3r-v). Again, this is a passing image in the text but a striking tableau that would have remained on stage until the end of the performance, even as Sabren and Guendolen exchange extended recriminations and threats of death and vengeance. The inert players' embracing bodies suggest a British landscape that is a fusion of both Brutan warrior and a foreign woman. Yet this synthesis is defused by Guendolen: Locrine will be buried in Troynovant, in “his fathers tombe,” absorbed into the landscape defined by Brute, to whom, Guendolen states, “we owe our country, liues and goods” (sig. K4v). Estrild, however, will “lie without the shallow vaults, / Without the honour due vnto the dead” (sig. K4v), a fate identical to that of Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* (pub. 1594), another woman alien to the culture into which she has, through captivity and perceived erotic currency, been absorbed; in the play's final lines, Tamora's body is ordered to be thrown “to beasts and birds to pray” (sig. K4v). Excluded from burial, Estrild is alone amongst the play's suicides in not giving her name to a British region or river. In this way, Guendolen erases Estrild from the dialogue of founder, name, place, and essence. The Brutan future will be Trojan, determined by Queen Guendolen and her son Madan, the grandson of Brute and Corineus.

However, perhaps *Locrine*'s most complex performance of the synthesis of insular landscape, pagan etiology, suicide, and the resurrecting qualities of Brutus founders, is embodied in Sabren. This may have been intensified in performance in ways that are occluded on the printed page. Declaring that her "virgins hands are too too weake" to kill herself with her dead father's sword (sig. K3v), the encircled Sabren escapes Guendolen's extended threats of violent death by leaping into a conveniently adjacent river with the lines "And that which Locrine's sword could not perform, / This pleasant stream shall present bring to pass" (sig. K4r). Like Humber, Sabren's self-drowning could have been enacted by the player jumping through the trap in the centre of the stage, merging her, figuratively, with the river that will be called, by Guendolen's decree, "*Sabren* for euer" (sig. K4v). I suggest, however, that through the convention of stage doubling, this suicide may have further implications in performance.

Examining the Queen's Men, McMillin and MacLean make a detailed study of the company's possible doubling strategies, particularly necessary when touring with a reduced company. This includes assessing the minimum number of boy actors required, determined by the number of female or youthful male characters onstage at any one time, and those required for the immediately preceding or following scenes (107). This strategy can also suggest ways in which doubling was used as a satirical or poetic stage effect which can, as McMillin and MacLean note, be "part of [a] play's beauty" (112). Adopting this methodology for *Locrine*, without definitively assigning the play to the Queen's Men, it appears to require four or five boy actors, principally for the roles of Guendoline, Estrild, Sabren, Madan and, possibly, Thrasimachus, who describes himself as "young and of a tender age" (sig. I2v). This maximum number is suggested by the play's final scene, discussed above, in which all five characters

appear onstage at once. The scene is immediately followed by the epilogue, as spoken by Ate. However, by casting herself into the “river” Sabren in fact exits the stage nineteen lines before the end of the scene, which also requires time for all onstage to exit. This makes the boy playing Sabren the most likely candidate to reappear as Ate, the early exit affording time for the player to change costume and re-enter. If this is the case, it presents a strikingly poetic and evocative use of doubling. Sabren is the play’s most vulnerable and guiltless character. She was also, as previously shown, one of the most frequently referenced Brutan figures in early modern poetry.²⁹ Aside from a brief, silent appearance alongside her mother (sig. I2v) Sabren does not appear again or speak until discovering her parents’ bodies in the final scene, lamenting them with a call for sympathy antithetical to Ate’s callousness, asking “What fierce *Achilles*, what hard stonie flint, / Would not bemone this mournfull Tragedie?” (sig. K2v). Her failed suicide with Locrine’s sword is directly followed by the entrance of the antagonists Thrasimachus, Madan, and a company of soldiers, led by Guendolen, who calls for Sabren, “*Locrines* only ioy,” to be found so “That I may glut my mind with lukewarm blood” (sig. K3r). This mass entrance would visually have overwhelmed the childlike figure. Yet Sabren commands the scene, speaking a third of its lines. Further, much of Guendolen’s speech is used to threaten and describe Sabren. This retains the scene’s focus on her distress, resilience, and vulnerability. Further, Sabren’s lines are spoken in three uninterrupted speeches given by a child character surrounded by armoured enemies, their massed attention augmenting her presence and authority. She calls upon the spirits of landscape to mourn Locrine and Estrild:

²⁹ See Schwyzer, “Purity,” 26.

You mountain nimphs which in these desarts raigh,
 Cease off your hastie chase of sauadge beasts,
 Prepare to see a heart opprest with care,

 You *Driades* and lightfoote *Satiri*,
 You gracious Faries which at euening tide,
 Your closets leaue with heauenly beautie storde,
 And on your shoulders spread your golden locks,
 You sauadge beares in caues and darkened dennes,
 Come waile with me, the martiall Locrines death. (sig. K3v)

Sabren invokes a dense, wild, and dynamic pastoral landscape. Nymphs that hunt savage beasts through the desert, dryads, satyrs, and fairies whose “heavenly” beauty is confined to night-time wanderings, and even bears lurking in caves, are called upon to mourn Locrine, whose name now defines and demarcates the topography they inhabit. The speech is Sabren’s first following the army’s entrance – Guendolen’s line immediately following is to express amazement and glee that Sabren still lives (sig. K4r) – yet her grieving invocation goes uninterrupted, suggesting a performance of awed, or at least respectful, silence from the enemies surrounding her that gives space to this conjuration of a pagan British landscape spoken by Locrine’s tragic daughter.

Analysis of the possible dramaturgical context of Sabren’s onstage presence reveals a powerful and fearless figure of childlike loyalty and innocence. Yet if doubled with Ate, Sabren becomes physically, disturbingly, fused with *Locrine*’s hellish presenter. Ate opens the play “with thunder and lightning all in black, with a burning torch in one hand and a bloodie swoord in the other” (sig. A3r). The play’s

closing image may have been of the boy playing Sabren's immediate reappearance as Ate following that character's self-drowning. This is a troubling and complex synthesis, embodying in a single player the revenant-like image of a Brutan founder, a suicide, a British river, and the pagan deity who, as performed in *The Araygnment of Paris*, was the instigator of the events leading to the destruction of Troy. This final interaction temporally drags *Locrine*'s vision of British foundation back into dialogue with the Trojan founders' own tragic origins. In this speculative model of *Locrine* in performance, Sabren/Ate presents an onstage image that, whilst lost in print, might lead an audience of self-identifying Brutan descendents into a concluding encounter with a troubling hybrid figure, enforcing an instance of the "pretence of sensual contact with the vanished past" (Walsh 2) that not only offered few concessions to those who looked to their Brutan origins for confidence or dignity, but allowed those origins' worst and most ancient implications to resurrect innocence as chaos, erupting bodily into the material present. Collectively, these suicides present the interaction of landscape and Brutan founders as resulting from defeat, treachery and despair. Additionally, those familiar with the Brutan histories would know that the play does not represent a tragic yet necessary cleansing of a corrupt generation that might clear the way for better rule, as *Gorboduc* could be argued to do. Locrine's child heir, Madan, who accompanies his triumphant mother at the play's end, will become a lecherous, perverse and violent king whose crimes result in his being eaten by wolves. Madan, in fact, may have starred in his own play. A "Madon, King of Britain" was recorded in the Stationer's Register in 1660 (Wiggins 6: ref. 1608). Its attribution to Francis Beaumont is unreliable due to several incorrect attributions appearing in the same entry and thus, too, is any attempt to date the play. Yet this suggests the possibility that the action of *Locrine* had a tragic onstage continuation.

In its raw materials, *Locrine* is a text typical of its cultural moment, largely unoriginal in adopting tropes of English Senecan tragedy familiar from *Gorboduc* and post-*Tamburlaine* dramaturgy and preoccupations with the exotic Near East. However, in applying these to the Brutan founders' "immortalisation as geography," the play enacts an idiosyncratic fusion of "barbarous" coloniser and insular landscape, from the Scythian Humber's costume and language pre-echoing the British river he will name and become, to Sabren's pastoral eulogy for her Trojan father and subsequent riverine suicide-transformation. It is an unhappy and violent vision of Rothstein's formulation that "origin defines essence". In performance, the "haunting presence-in-death" of Brute, Locrine, Estrild, *et al* may have reminded the playhouse audience, as Ebrauk had reminded Henry VII at York, that as "prematue of Your progenie," the Brutan founders were "lurking still" within English blood and topography in far more troubling ways than those suggested by more patriotic and didactic expressions of Brutan history. In the following section, I will explore how even the performance of such a patriotic figure might be troubled by the context in which it was presented.

King Lude

In *Locrine*, the foundation of Britain was accomplished through the violent interaction of founder and landscape. Here, I show the ways in which a Brutan figure might interact with urban, rather than natural, topography, in the context not of originary foundation but of civic renewal, showing that Brutan time was a sequence not only of foundational moments but of destruction and regeneration. The Brutan histories' King Lud, who rebuilt London in the years before Christ's birth and, in a quasi-

foundational act, renamed the city after himself, was the best known exponent of these energies. A play named *King Lude* was performed at the Rose playhouse in 1594. No text survives, but if the title of a lost, or textless, play can be read as to some extent indicating content, then recent work by David McInnis and Matthew Steggle supports the study of these events' possible meanings, arguing that "[l]ost plays ... should be regarded positively as witnesses to otherwise unrecorded theatrical events rather than as mere failures to preserve a literary text" (7).³⁰ Thus, despite *King Lude*'s status as a textless play, through attention to Lud as the celebrated rebuilders of London and icon of its capacity for regeneration, it is possible to explore how audience perceptions of the play's performance at the Rose might have been determined by Lud's iconic resonance. This question of reception, however, also involves accounting for the contribution made by a performance's civic and dramaturgical contexts. In the case of *King Lude*, the Rose performance took place in a context of plague and the representation of civic destruction at the same playhouse which may have compromised or overpowered the effectiveness of Lud's iconic presence.

Before King Lud, London had been Troynovant, or New Troy, as named by Brute at Britain's founding. At the close of *Locrine*, Guendolen announces what is to be done with Locrine's body: "Retire braue followers vnto *Troynovant* / Where we will celebrate these exequies / And place yoong *Locrine* in his fathers tombe" (sig.

³⁰ Manley and MacLean cite the example of *Orlando Furioso* (pub. 1594) in which Robert Greene digresses hugely from his source, to illustrate the dangers of predicting a play's content from its possible sources, when authorial intervention may change much, or everything (126). Nonetheless, if a character gives their name to a play's title, as Lud does, we may be reasonably secure in assuming that the character featured in the play.

K4v). Troynovant was also the burial site of Brutan monarchs. Elizabethan poetry made great use of Troynovant; it appears during the sequence in which the “Thames doth the Medway wedd” (1596; IIII.XI, f. 156) in the *Faerie Queene*, a “chorographic poem” embedded within Spenser’s larger scheme that narrates a pageant of personified global rivers and cities that “move from rivers ‘present’ at the marriage to old and new histories” (van Es, 59) relating to each river’s origins and nation. Troynovant is described as “wearing a Diademe embattild wide / With hundred turrets, like a Turribant,” or turban (1596; IIII.XI, f. 164), the headgear seeming to emphasise once more the Brutans’ classical near-eastern origins.³¹ Plays dealing with English history also evoked Troynovant. In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bongay* (pub. 1594), Bacon prophesies Elizabeth I as one day emerging “here where Brute did build his Troynouant” (sig. 11v), and the second part of *The Troublesome Raigne of Iohn King of England* (pub. 1591) has the French dauphin refer to London as “Troynouant, your faire *Metropolis*” (sig. 13v). But London had a second and subsequent Brutan origin, etymologically connected to its present name and topography. In the first printed text of a Lord Mayor’s Show, George Peele’s *The Deuice of the Pageant Borne Before Woolstone Dixi Lord Maior of the Citie of London* (perf. 1585; pub. 1585), a child representing “London” declares himself “New *Troye* ... whome *Lud* my Lord surnam'd, / *London* the glory of the western side” (sig. A2v), referring to King Lud, who renovated the city’s walls and renamed it after himself. Here, Lud represents not a founder but a re-founder or renewer. As Manley explains, this role defers in typological terms to the essence determined by “the authority of the

³¹ Steggle notes that the word “London” is never used in *The Faerie Queene* (“Spenser’s Ludgate” 35).

foundation,” meaning that whilst “the mythical King Lud renews London’s walls and gates and gives the renewed city his name” this cannot alter his ancestor Brute’s originating act (*Literature* 144).

Manley characterises Lud’s rebuilding of London as representing, along with “the acts of the lawgiver Donwallo,” the “recoveries and renewals that sustain historic purpose amid the overwhelming disasters of British history” (192). As a material and etymological symbol of Lud’s regenerative force, and in the absence of a playtext, I will consider Ludgate as one “text” through which spectators may have been able to contextualise his onstage presence. One of these “overwhelming disasters,” as identified by Manley, was a series of plague epidemics in 1592-94. Thus, whilst the 1594 performance of *King Lude* appears to have portrayed the embodiment of civic renewal, this occurred within a city that was experiencing sustained disaster, perceived by many as divine punishment. As I will show, *King Lude*’s performance fell amongst a number of plays performed at the Rose within the same years that dealt with civic destruction, not renewal. This destruction was often set within narratives with direct religious and biblical allegorical contexts. In this way, the Brutus histories not only continued to create a discourse with the early modern present through the performance of those histories’ reanimated dead, but this discourse was complicated and challenged, on the same playhouse stage, by competing narratives and historiographic traditions.

Whilst the Brutus histories’ material on King Lud as the rebuilder of London offers narrative elements suitable for a play, the presiding emphasis in those histories is one of rebuilding, resurgence and renewal, of increased civic pride and security. King Lud

lived at the far end of pre-Christian time to Locrine, seventy-two years before the birth of Christ (Holinshed, 1587: I, *Hist.* 23). Fabyan's account is typical:

This man was honourable in all his dedes for he edyfyed new temples, and repayred the olde. He also repayred olde cytyes & townes and specyally in the cytye of Troynouant he causyd many buyldynges to be made and gyrde the sayde citye about wyth a strong wall of lyme and stone. And in the weste parte of the sayde walle he arreryd a fayre and stronge gate, and commaunded it to be called Luddys gate. (f. 16v)

Ludgate is often the chroniclers' focus, revealing the structure's significance for Londoners and writers of historiographic texts. Hardyng's fifteenth-century chronicle gives us much that is essential to Lud and his city: "Lud kyng of Brytain buylded frome London stone [the site of modern-day Cannon Street station] to Lud gate & called that parte Luds toune, & after by processe, was called London by turnyng of tongues" (f. 35v). The effect of cultural and historical change upon language is vividly captured in the phrase "turnyng of tongues," and also shows us that, despite this process, it is difficult for Hardyng to name or describe London without invoking Lud. Holinshed refers to the same process as that of Lud's name being "drowned in pronuntiation" (1587: I, *Hist.* 23) and speculates as to which sites had once held Lud's palaces and temples, called "endlesse moniments" in the *Faerie Queene* (1590; II.X, f. 338). This focus often manifests as a preoccupation with etymological origins. The sceptical Camden notes the gate was named either "Lud-gate of king *Lud*, or Flud-gate, as *Leland* is of opinion, of a little floud running beneath it" (1610; f. 423). Etymology could be used to dissolve origins as well as inscribe them upon

topography. As when Brute transformed Albion into Britain and exterminated its giants, each origin necessitates the partial occlusion of what has come before. Grafton recounts the following:

Bale wryteth how there fell great dissension betwene Lud and his brother Nennius ... about the chaunging of the name of Troynouaunt into Luddes towne, or London, because it might be the occasion that the memorie of Troy and the worthie deedes there done, should thereby be buried in obliuion, and be forgotten. (f. 66-67)

In *Philadelphus*, Harvey suggests that the dispute presented an opportunity for “discourse”: “It is iustice, both to respect our auncestors, and iustice to consider our own glory: This were a pretty question for discourse, which name ought to take place, and stand in force” (sig. H4r).

As has been seen in Manley’s association between Lud and Mulmutius Dunwallo as lawmakers, one textual community for whom Lud seems to have had particular meaning was the legal profession, for whom he represented a reformer. Polydore Vergil seemed to accept that Lud “reformed the commonwealth. For he abolished some laws [and] put an end to no few abuses” (trans. Sutton). Lud is also cited as an example of “the efficient and materiall cause” given in Abraham Fraunce’s *The Lawiers Logike* (1588): “the cause efficient either maketh or destroyeth ... and dooth either procreate or bring foorth that which was not before, as God the worlde, king *Lud* the Citie of *London*” (sig. D3v). This association with law and “materiall cause” was perhaps enhanced by Ludgate’s function since the fourteenth century as a debtors’ prison (Harris, “Ludgate,” 22) although even here, as Harris notes, early

modern accounts seemed to associate the site with protective containment as much as punishment; “defaulters on loans tended to be regarded less as criminals than as the hapless victims of rapacious creditors. Ludgate was viewed as a site of protection as much as discipline” (23). Lud was, Holinshed states simply, “greatlie beloued of all the Britaines” (1587: I, *Hist.* 23) as a protector and rebuilder represented in statuary on the city’s western gate that bore his name, and who in name and history was a synecdoche for London’s ancient capacity for renewal.

I propose that *King Lude* might be approached by attending to the possible receptions of Lud as a staged figure embodying the compression of topography, etymology and Brutus “begynner” explored throughout this chapter. Even in the absence of a known narrative for *King Lude*, Lud’s performed presence can be explored as a dramaturgical event in itself – character as stage effect, perhaps. That is, the physical presence of a figure with iconic and allegorical resonance might be considered alongside, and in addition to, dialogue and action as a means of entertaining, and conveying meaning to, audiences. Thus, supported by evidence of the associations Lud will have held for spectators, the possible effects of the play’s only known performance can be explored.

King Lude was performed by Sussex’s Men during a six-week residency at the Rose playhouse that began on the 27th of December, 1593 (Gurr, *Shakespearean* 55). This was a mere fourteen days after their patron, the fourth Earl of Sussex, died.³² The company performed twelve plays between December and February, when the theatres were once more closed by the Privy Council due to plague. *King Lude* was performed on Friday January 18th, and was one of only two plays not to receive a repeat

³² “Sussex’s Men,” *LPD*.

performance during this short season.³³ The receipts were 22 shillings, a middling level of success for the run but not so little as to deter the possibility of a repeat performance.³⁴ Sussex's Men's repertory at the Rose seems to have comprised old plays, with only one, *Titus Andronicus*, marked as "ne," or "new" (Foakes, *Henslowe's* 21). This is all that is currently known of *King Lude* and the context of its performance. Regarding the play's possible content, Bullough cites historiographic texts to support speculation regarding narratives (304) whilst Wiggins limits his speculation and cites only Holinshed as a possible source (3: ref. 907). Thus, there is little evidence or criticism through which to directly examine *King Lude*, why it was not repeated, or what aspects of the Brutus histories it represented. However, adopting Steggle and McInnis's methodologies for approaching textless plays, *King Lude* can be considered as "a complex and multi-faceted cultural phenomenon in its own right," accessible beyond the written or printed record of its action and dialogue, extant or otherwise (6). I suggest this "cultural phenomenon" might be approached through the possible meanings and receptions of the embodied onstage presence of Lud, and those resources available to the textual communities that both staged and received *King Lude*. One set of associations available to more Londoners than any written text would have derived from Ludgate, and the statues of the king and his sons that faced east from his eponymous gatehouse.

Ian Archer notes that "[a]part from the statue of King Lud, the supposed builder of the city walls, on Ludgate, his impact on civic iconography was limited" (209). Ludgate, via supposed origin, etymology and statuary, had a synecdochic

³³ The other being *William the Conqueror* (Foakes, *Henslowe's* 20).

³⁴ In contrast, *Gorge a Grene* made only 20 shillings on January 15th but returned on the 22nd (Foakes, *Henslowe's* 20).

interconnection with its builder. Thus Jonathan Gil Harris's suggestion that Ludgate was "a vital component in the symbolic topography of London" having "signifying power as a nodal point, connecting not only the City's inside and outside but also its past, present, and future" ("Ludgate" 17) may allow the structure to stand as a species of civic or historiographic "text" informing *King Lude* both in presentation and reception. In this context it is important to understand that, by the early 1580s, Ludgate's medieval structure was dilapidated and "in no shape to be considered [in Spenser's term] an 'endlesse moniment'" (Steggle, "Spenser's Ludgate," 36). This included the statues of Lud and his sons, which had been defaced during the wider iconoclasm of Edward VI's reign and subsequently restored by Mary I as what Harris terms "an unlikely signifier of the ascendancy of the Catholic Church" ("Ludgate," 16) through a process of "setting new heads on their old bodies" (Stow, *Survey*, f. 33). However, given Lud's association with rebuilding and civic tradition, the Marian restoration of the statues may well have appeared to reassert a powerful connection between the present and antiquity, seeking to configure Edward's Protestant reign as the briefest of aberrations. These statues were recontextualised for *King Lude*'s audience by a recent restoration programme that perhaps echoed Lud's most famous actions in the Brutus histories:

In 1586, as the Queen's Privy Council made preparations for the expected Spanish Armada by extensively repairing the stonework of the gates and citadels in England's port cities, London's rulers likewise decided to rebuild the now dilapidated Ludgate wall as an expression of a militarized English patriotism. With funds levied from the citizens, statues of Lud and his two sons were installed. (Harris, "Ludgate," 16)

Stow's wording is unclear but suggests that, whilst Ludgate itself was rebuilt, the statues had been preserved and then replaced "as afore, on the East side" (f. 33). Lud's survival in stone, then, was enabled by the enforced material investment of London's civic communities, identified in Chapter One as having particular attachment to the Brutian histories. For audiences to witness the performance and hear Lud's name spoken may have conjured the statue's image, the renovation of which, Steggle argues, constitutes the "powerful assertion that King Lud is important to Ludgate, and that the rebuilding renewed, rather than destroyed, his legacy" ("Spenser's Ludgate" 36). As echoed in the names of Ludgate and London, the performance would have evoked for its audience the language and Brutian resonance of shared and familiar topography.

Lud's performance was of its moment in other ways, and may have evoked the presence and proximity of the king's physical remains within and beneath the city. In *Untimely Matter*, Harris examines John Stow's attempts to translate a Hebrew-inscribed stone unearthed during the 1586 rebuilding project (101). Stow, whilst fascinated by the inscribed stone uncovered by the workmen, would also have been aware, through his close familiarity with the Brutian histories, that the workmen were digging in the vicinity of Lud's reputed burial site. Fabian noted that Lud had been "buried in his gate called Portlud or Ludgate" (f. 16v). Stow adjusts Fabian, writing in the *Summarie* that Lud "was buried nere to the same Ludgate, in a Temple whiche he there buylded" (f. 18v). To dig in the vicinity of Ludgate, for a member of the textual communities for whom the Brutian histories represented the lived ancestral past, was potentially to disturb Lud's bones. Manley notes Stow's habitual recording of, and interest in, the "'innumerable bodies of the dead' interred, in times of plague,

in the mass graves of the suburbs” and that “Stow’s archaeological impulse is inseparable from his spiritual membership of a community where the past was in a more or less continual state of disinterral” (“Sites” 41). In 1586, Lud, figuratively at least, was part of this “continual state of disinterral,” both as potentially unearthed human remains and, in 1594, as an instance of the disinterred historical dead reanimated from Nashe’s “Graue of Obluion” at the Rose. Manley describes London as, for its governors and inhabitants, “a physical embodiment of historic destiny and community spirit,” noting that “the account of London’s walls and gates, with which John Stow begins the *Survey*, serves to delineate this theoretically inviolable space” (“Sites” 40). It is possible that Lud’s onstage presence would have been a celebratory, protective one in the tradition of his fellow civic Brutans Gurgunt, Brennius and Ebrauk who had appeared to speak for, protect, and celebrate their cities. *King Lude*, however, is complicated when considered within both the moment of its performance and within competing typologies of place. One of these complications was the play’s performance between extended outbreaks of plague in London. Such harrowing conditions may have inflected the reception of a performance of the city’s glorious regeneration. Another complication was *King Lude*’s appearance within a repertory at the Rose that also included plays representing the destruction of cities to which London was also commonly compared, Jerusalem and Sodom. These competing typologies, I suggest, may have challenged and even neutralised *King Lude*’s affective potential.

All performances are contingent upon their moment. Addressing this, in relation to the possible reasons that a new play by Lord Strange’s Men, *The Taner of Denmarke*, did not receive a repeat performance despite high receipts, Manley and MacLean consider

elements external to the play's capacity to please: "Perhaps 23 May 1592 was a particularly fine day on which high expectations ... met with particularly sharp disappointment, or perhaps the play proved unmanageable from a technical standpoint" (126). As seen with Gurgunt being rained off in Norwich in 1578, this speculation is useful in allowing exterior factors such as weather to influence thinking regarding the contingencies of performance. A figure of regeneration, both in the Brutus histories and in his reappearance as publicly funded statuary, King Lud was performed during a brief period during which the playhouses were opened between plague outbreaks that otherwise kept them closed for almost two years (Knutson 452-53). I will contextualise and foreground *King Lude*'s moment via the popular Old Testament play, Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene's *A Looking Glass for London and England* (perf. 1592; pub. 1594).³⁵ This context reveals something of the performed and typological evocation of London in the months prior to both the playhouse closures and the moment at which the plague abated sufficiently for the theatres to be reopened in the winter of 1593-4.

In a treatise written during the 1593 plague, *Christs Teares Over Ierusalem*, Thomas Nashe voiced a popular typological association of the time: "As great a desolation as Ierusalem, hath London deserued. Whatsoever of Ierusalem I haue

³⁵ The play was popular; printed by Thomas Creede and sold by William Barley, it reached five editions by 1617 (Sager 56). Whilst the numerous performances of *A Looking Glass* might suggest that it was more popular than *King Lude*, this may be misleading. The record of *King Lude*'s performance only survives due to Sussex's Men's residency at the Rose during the period in which Henslowe kept his "diary". Thus, evidence of their repertory and repeat performances is limited to these few weeks whilst, conversely, *A Looking Glass* was performed by Derby's Men (*DEEP* ref. 174), who were the Rose's resident company and thus subject of Henslowe's ongoing account.

written, was but to lend her [London] a Looking-glasse” (f. 78). This admonitory comparison was common, and had been performed at the Rose in 1592 in *A Looking Glass for London and England*. Beatrice Groves notes that one of “Elizabethan England’s most cherished beliefs was that ‘Israel’ and ‘Jerusalem’ were concepts which transcended race and geography” (150), and that London might be imagined as a new Jerusalem. This provided a typological invocation that was in competition with the configuring of London as New Troy or Lud’s Town. Tracey Hill notes that “[o]ne consistent theme of royal entries from the fourteenth century to the mid-sixteenth century ... was the personification of London as a new Jerusalem” (*Pageantry* 28).

A Looking Glass explicitly adopts this concept of transference to admonitory effect. The play’s biblical narrative relates Jonah’s reluctance to obey God and preach to the decadent people of Nineveh. However, the action is framed by regular addresses to the audience by the figure of Oseas, a prophet from another biblical era who, the stage directions indicate, is “*brought in by an Angell ... set downe ouer the Stage in a Throne*” (sig. B1r) and remains onstage throughout, observing the action and admonishing sinful London, embodied by the playhouse audience, with apocalyptic warnings. The play ends on a hopeful note, with multiple Christian conversions saving many characters from the deaths that have afflicted others; but the play also alludes to the 70^{CE} destruction of Jerusalem. Groves notes that “*Looking Glass* reminded its audience that their aspiration to build Sion in their land was as precarious as well as a blessed undertaking” (153). Four performances of *A Looking Glass* were recorded by Henslowe, “twice at the Rose in March 1591, again in April that year and later in June 1592 by Lord Strange’s Men” (Connolly 5).

In the same period that *A Looking Glass* was performed, Henslowe records ten performances of another lost play, *Tittus & Vespacia*, which Manley has all but

proved to tackle the destruction of Jerusalem alluded to in Lodge and Greene's play ("Lost Plays" 174-77). The two plays were performed in the same week in June of 1592, and one may wonder what the audience made of Oseas's admonitions such as "London take heed, these sinnes abound in thee" (sig. C1r), "Sin raignes in thee o London euery houre" (sig. C1r) and, most telling, "Repent all you that heare, for feare of plagues / O London" (sig. F1r). The word "plague" is an incantatory presence in *A Looking Glass*, spoken sixteen times and usually in direct address. Performances may have become increasingly pointed because, as Alice Hall records, citing the Acts of the Privy Council, "[n]otice of increasing plague deaths appeared in August 13, 1592, when plague was described as 'dailie increasing in London'," the September Thames Fair was postponed and the Lord Mayor's Show abandoned in October (96). Adams suggests the playhouses may have been closed as early as August 1592 (152), only a few weeks clear of the final performance of *A Looking Glass*. Whilst Sager has argued against the play's appeal as didactic material in favour of its value as spectacle (56), the two are not necessarily exclusive and one may be used to intensify the other. Playgoers may plausibly have had Oseas's warnings ringing in their ears as the onstage and offstage deaths increased. Lodge and Greene, in a dramaturgical sleight of hand, had transferred Oseas to Nineveh, allowing the comparisons to London to end with the Ninevite conversions. But many in the audience would have known that, in the Old Testament, Hosea's homilies are directed primarily at the sinful city of Jerusalem and that, unlike the Ninevites, "the Jews did not repent and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed" (Sager 59). London, whether as a new Troy or new Jerusalem, was locked into a typology of divinely authorised annihilation.

This was perhaps a frightening parallel in time of plague, even for those welcoming God's wrath, and those fears are reflected in practical guides to surviving

the outbreak, which provide evidence of beliefs and activities relating to the threat.³⁶ In Simon Kellwaye's *A Defensatiue Against the Plague* (1593), Londoners and, finally, London itself – the entities collectively addressed in *A Looking Glass* – become plague hosts. Kellwaye evokes the disease as being “most commonly” spread

by accompanying our selues with such as either haue, or lately haue had the disease them selues; or at least haue beene conuersant with such as haue bene infected therewith. But for the most parte it doth come by receauing into our custody some clothes, or such like things that haue bene vsed about some infected body, wherein the infection may lye hidden a long time. (sig. B1v)

Kellwaye's channels of infection quickly expand to include, potentially, everyone, including those present only through their discarded garments. His proposed “second meanes” of avoiding infection is to “flye far off from the place infected” (sig. B2v). An official proclamation of 1593 warned that “the infection of the plague is at this present greatly increased and dispersed aswel in the Citie of London and Westminster” and throughout the country; another issues the infamous instruction that “the houses of such persons out of the which there shall die any of the plague” should be closed up for six weeks, including anyone still resident inside.³⁷ Londoners could either flee the city or risk horrifying imprisonment in their homes. For those leaving London at its western end, their last glimpse of the city might have included the statue of Lud, a rebuildier and protector seemingly rendered powerless.

³⁶ These include William Perkins's *Two treatises· I. Of the Nature and Practise of Repentance. II. Of the combat of the flesh and spirit* (Cambridge, 1593).

³⁷ Both proclamations were produced as single, unpaginated sheets.

I have dwelt on *A Looking Glass* and the outbreak of plague because it was a mere few weeks after the latter plague abated sufficiently for the theatres to be reopened in the winter of 1593-4 that *King Lude* received its only recorded performance. The performance of civic debasement, however, may have fallen closer still to *King Lude*'s moment. On the day before its performance, January 17th, Sussex's Men performed a lost play of *Abram and Lotte* (Foakes, *Henslowe's* 20; 21) which, if it followed the biblical accounts of Abraham and Lot accurately, would have included God's destruction of the sinful cities of Sodom and Gommorah (Gen. XIX.24-28). Even had these events not been addressed directly, any scripturally aware audience would have associated Lot with these events just as Lud was inseparable from London's rebuilding. *Abram and Lotte* was performed three times and drew higher receipts than *King Lude*, making 52 shillings on January 9th and 30s on the 17th. This, arguably, further intensifies the narratives and experience of civic destruction challenging King Lud's onstage presence as a figure of renewal. This presence itself was, as I have argued, a dramaturgical effect in its own right; this effect was achieved through the embodiment of a known figure as a form of spectacle or property, generating meaning independent of dialogue or action.

Andrew Sofer argues that a prop must have a meaning "in the moment" including "the mood and makeup of the audience on a given night" and that as "concrete synecdoches of that dynamic event we call performance, props remind us to keep theatrical meaning at once in our grasp and on the move" (16). "The given night," in this instance, was January 18th in the winter of 1593-94, and, as have I suggested, the most "concrete synecdoche" available regarding the performance of *King Lude* is the player-embodied "disinterred" presence of Lud himself. Unless, and it is possible, *King Lude* eschewed all narrative possibilities provided by the Brutan

histories, the performance would have addressed Troynovant's celebrated renovation and renaming as Lud's Town. The histories' account had recently been echoed in Ludgate's restoration and its repaired statues. But with *King Lude*, these narratives of renewal and endurance are situated within or, in Sofer's terms, "on the move" through, a performance wherein the embodiment of regenerative London took place at a time of civic crisis. The play's audience had been told to flee the city and to fear their peers, and the principal cause of the epidemic, as Kellwaye noted, "howsoeuer it doth come," was "a iust punishment of God" (sig. B1v). This narrative was given biblical re-enactment in *Abram and Lotte*. This same audience had, only the night before, been confronted at the playhouse with a reminder – if one was needed – of the punishment that had befallen disobedient cities in the past, a biblical event they appeared to be directly experiencing.

King Lud, then, as a Brutan figure of London's capacity for regeneration, was embodied onstage in a context that forcefully negated, or rendered ironic, his meaning and function. King Lud may have been welcomed as representing and heralding London's ludic regeneration as demonstrated by the reopened theatres, a Brutan civic figure negotiating new hopes just as Ebrauk and Brennus had done for their cities in 1486. However, particularly given the high receipts achieved by *Abram and Lotte*, it is also possible that Lud at the Rose fell short as an icon of urban protection and resurgence. He provided both insufficient comfort from, or context for, the reality of plague; a Brutan figure typologically overwhelmed by competing scriptural associations of London with the annihilated cities of Jerusalem, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Troy. That is, if King Lud, as a Brutan synecdoche for London, carried less authority than the biblical analogues presented at the Rose, then he also, as a rebuilder rather than founder, could not escape the etiological source of all Brutan

typology: the doomed city of Troy, imprinted onto the landscape by Brute's foundation of Troynovant. The destruction of Troy, as Teramura has shown, was subsequently presented on the Rose's stage in a series of plays that seems to have connected, in repertory terms, accounts of the Trojan world with *The Conqueste of Brute* (129). This play provides the only evidence of an early modern staging of Brute's conquest narrative. I will argue that one reason for this apparent absence may have been Brute's possible function as a bridging figure between the Trojan and Brutan worlds, whose adventures positioned him in the "Trojan" past rather than the "British" future.

The Conqueste of Brute

References to Brute, to his conquest of Albion, his establishment of the Trojan-British inheritance and his role as the ur-essence of Brutan typology, have rumbled throughout this chapter. Yet in terms of the theatrical and pageant iconography examined, his embodied presence is notable by its absence, save in *Locrine*. The London civic tradition seems to have eschewed Brute, instead generating the giants Corineus and Gogmagog – and thus, figuratively, their conquest-defining wrestling match – as its principle icons of national foundation. *Locrine*'s opening dumbshow and first scene present Brute, but do so as a once-ferocious figure close to death, his achievements offered only as a bedbound monologue of past glories. It is strange that, going by the surviving evidence, the story of Brute and the adventures that led him to Albion were not performed as a play until *The Conqueste of Brute* in 1598 or 1599 at the Rose. Even here, however, the evidence suggests a drama that, in a number of

ways, compromised or fragmented Brute's story by possibly including events from the reign of the post-Brute king Bladud.

The existence of a play, or plays, addressing Brute, is attested to by a number of entries in Henslowe's *Diary*. First, there is a payment on July 30th 1598 to John Day for a "Booke ... called the con-queste of brute wth the firste fynding of the bathe" (Foakes, *Henslowe's* 96). This is followed by five payments to Henry Chettle on August 9th, September 16th and the 12th, 18th, and 22nd of October, towards a play named *Brute* (98; 100). These payments are followed on December by the previously referenced payment of twenty-four shillings towards the purchase of "divers things for to macke cotties for gyantes in brvttē" (102). In addition to this, Henslowe made a payment between March 22nd and 31st 1599 "vnto the m^r of the Revelles man for the lycensynge of A booke called brute grenshilde" (106). Whilst this entry is often taken to relate to a different play, one relating the acts of a later Brutus king, this is not as apparent as it may at first seem and muddies the waters further as to what kind of play *The Conqueste of Brute* was and, importantly, how much of Brute-the-founder-of-Britain it actually contained.³⁸ Firstly, the reference to "the first fyndinge of the bathe" seems to allude to the discovery of the hot springs at Bath, an event traditionally ascribed to King Bladud, father of Lear, who lived nine generations after Brute. Bullough therefore suggests the play "may have summarised the reigns of Locrine, Mempricus, and others until Bladud" (316). Equally, it may have attributed

³⁸ McMullan's taxonomy records *Conqueste* and *Greenshield* as two distinct plays ("Colonisation" 139); the *Lost Plays Database* does the same but presents these as a two-parter, "Conquests of Brute, Parts 1 and 2"; Wiggins treats the plays as separate but argues that the payments to Chettle and Day, being "anomalously high," may argue for the two authors having presented discrete, connected, plays (4: ref. 1161), in addition to the Rose's *Greenshield* (4: ref. 1177).

to Brute actions that the Brutus histories assigned to others. In either case, this dramaturgical decision would have compromised and muddled any account of Brute's actions, so consequential to configurations of the Brutus effect on British essence and character. What is impossible to determine is why, of all the events recorded in the nine generations of kings between Brute and Bladud, the discovery of healing baths was selected by the playmakers as deserving of a subtitle. Secondly, the payment towards coats for giants suggests that the play featured, and prioritised, the spectacular wrestling match between Corineus and Gogmagog: a famous event, embedded in London's self-performance, yet one that also sidelines Brute as an onstage icon of conquest. Finally, Henslowe's payment for "brute grenshilde" means that it cannot be determined whether the evidence relates to one or two plays. If the play was episodic, then a scene or two relating to Greenshield may well have appeared in a chronological sequence between Corineus's wrestling match and Bladud's discovery of the hot springs. Alternatively, Henslowe might be referring to two separate Brutus plays. The evidence, then, suggests that Brute did have his own play, or part of a play, in 1598-99, but that it incorporated episodes not associated with his life and, in terms of its dramaturgy, foregrounded events in which he was not the central figure. This is strange, because Brute's action-filled life prior to arriving in Albion could have appeared custom-designed for the playhouse.

His mother having died in childbirth, the fifteen-year-old Brute accidentally killed his father whilst hunting. Exiled by his grandfather, Brute rallies a population of Trojans living under the yoke of the Greek king Pandrasus, whom he attacks and defeats then releases in exchange for weapons, ships, wheat, and the hand of Pandrasus's daughter, Innogen. In their travels across the Mediterranean, Brute and his Trojans are joined by

others from the Trojan diaspora, led by the heroic Corineus, all of whom pledge themselves to Brute. Uncertain where to proceed, Brute leaves an offering at a temple of Diana and receives a dream-vision from the goddess telling him that he will discover and rule an island in the west. Travelling through France, the Trojan forces do battle with the Gallians before crossing the sea to Albion, landing at Totnes and thus beginning the defeat of the island's giants and subsequent colonisation referred to throughout this chapter.

As the revenant of Albanacht says of his father in *The Mirour for Magistrates*, Brute was a heroic leader and single-minded warrior: "T'increase his power with wightes of warlike skill, / Was all his minde his purpose and intent" (sig. B2r). Any or all of these episodes support this assessment, and would seem ripe for dramatisation. Brute's wily negotiations with Pandrasus and tactical marriage with Innogen both echo episodes from Henry V's actions following Agincourt, as essayed in the Queen's Men's play *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, which was probably first performed in the 1580s (*DEEP* ref. 252) and published in 1598. The encounter at Diana's temple, particularly, offers the opportunity for rich, ritualistic spectacle. Holinshed describes Brute's physical actions in detail useful for playmaking, describing him "knéeing before the idoll, and holding in his right hand a boll prepared for sacrifice full of wine, and the bloud of a white hinde," and both Brute's prayer and Diana's reply are reported in Latin and then translated into English verse (1587: I, *Hist.* 8). Brute's narrative as a whole is one of enormous energy and unbroken martial success, as if nothing less than such a surge could bridge the teeming classical world and the territory which Diana, in her prophecy, defines via its remote wildness: "farre by-west beyond the Gallike land is found, / An Ile which with the ocean seas inclosed is about, / Where giants dwelt sometime, but now is desart

ground” (1587: I, *Hist.* 9). In terms of the performance of Brutus founders, Brutus functioned as a bridge between these worlds, a purpose exhausted once Britain, and Troinovant, had been founded. He is, despite his apparent dominance of Brutus origins and essence, more a figure of the Trojan, near-eastern, past than of the subsequent territorialised identities of *Lochrine*’s divided Britain, a moment he fails to outlive. However they were dramatised, his adventures would have served as a kind of prequel to the earlier *Lochrine* but would, as Misha Teramura has shown, have bridged a sequence of plays performed at the Rose in the 1590s. Intentionally or otherwise, these would have created a cumulative repertory of the “historical narrative wherein the matter of Britain was intimately and organically joined to the matter of Troy” (128).³⁹ These plays, and their narrative of civic destruction in pagan antiquity,

³⁹ Teramura’s ingenious research notes that a large number of textless plays at the Rose between 1595 and 1600 attest by their titles to a repertory that created a non-sequential yet near-comprehensive retelling of Trojan history leading to Brutus’s Britain and onwards to the Norman conquest. These are: *1 & 2 Hercules* (1595 May-Nov); *Troy* (1596 Jun-Jul); *Dido and Aeneas* (1598 Jan); *The Conqueste of Brutus* (1598 Jul-Dec); *Troy’s Revenge* (1599 Feb-Oct); *Brutus Greenshield* (1599 March); *Troilus and Cressida* (1599 Apr); *Agamemnon* (1599 May-Jun); *Ferrex and Porrex* (1600 Mar-May) (128). The scale of the Rose’s historio-dramatic project becomes even clearer if we add those pre-1595 Brutus performances at the Rose, including *King Lude* (January 1594) and *Cutlacke* (1594 May-September), and a sequence of plays on post-Roman and Arthurian Britain (Teramura 132; Paul Whitfield White): *Chinon of England* (1595 Jan – 1596 November); *Vortigern* (1596 November – 1597 April); *Hengist* (1597 June); *Uther Pendragon* (June 1597); *Arthur, King of Britain* (April 1598); *Conan Prince of Cornwall* (October 1598); *Tristram of Lyons* (1599 October). Further, the Rose featured a number of plays on pre-Conquest English history. Add to this the Chamberlain’s Men’s extant plays of English medieval history, alongside those of the Queen’s Men and other chronicle plays, and we can see that London’s performed public history meant that playgoers could receive a comprehensive account of ancient, Brutus, British, and English history, without ever reading, or being able to read, a historiographic text.

would have demonstrated to audiences the past from which Brute had emerged, whilst embedding and securing him within the wider scheme of world history, both carrying with him the essence of the pagan, Trojan, near-east, and fixing the essence and identity of Britain within that scheme. This sense of embeddedness in time, however, would soon be eroded along with the historiographic basis of Brutus origins. As I will show in the following chapter, in the years following the accession of Scotland's James VI to the English throne, James and his regime invoked Brutus history in the service of James's project to unite Scotland and England. This higher profile for Brutus themes also occasioned a wider awareness of their historiographic fragility and Brutus drama, which had been integrated with chronological time through embodiment and repertory, became in various ways dislocated, compromised, and annihilated when performed and printed in the early years of James's reign.

Chapter Three: Reading Brutan Erosion (1604 – 1608)

In previous chapters I have examined Brutan drama from the perspective of those audience members, readers, and textual communities for whom the Brutan histories represented versions of the lived British past. In contrast, the central theme of this chapter is doubt, and the Brutan histories' gradual uncovering as "books of nothing". I will return to Paul Veyne's "modalities of wavering belief" (56), and the notion of a spectrum of historical dissonance oscillating between belief and disbelief. This chapter examines a sequence of early Jacobean Brutan playbooks and argues that these may have triggered in readers a sense of etiological erosion even as that etiology was being invoked to promote James VI and I's project to "reunite" England and Scotland, the kingdoms divided by Brute. Three of these playbooks, the anonymous plays *Leir* (pub. 1605), *No-Body and Some-body* (pub. 1606), and the first quarto of Shakespeare's *King Lear* (pub. 1608) share the generic designation on the title page of "true chronicle history" and will serve as this chapter's case studies. "True chronicle history" is an ironic categorisation, given the Brutan histories' eroding claim to historicity, yet it is one which was, as I will show, applied almost exclusively to Jacobean Brutan playbooks. My analysis is placed within the wider context of these texts' appearance at a historical moment, 1603-1608, that saw a renewed focus on Brutan history as a propagandistic device in the service of King James VI and I's project to unite England and Scotland. This context is established via the exploration of possible interactions between the London edition of James's *Basilikon Doron* (1603) and Munday's *Trivmphes of Re-vnited Britania* (1605). Parallels may be found in the way that the scepticism and resistance that greeted James's project are echoed and mirrored in the scepticism that increasingly characterised attitudes to the Brutan

histories. Conversely, many texts that did seek to utilise the Brutian histories in support of British union also seem to have drawn inadvertent attention to their doubtful historicity.

This paradox of simultaneous endorsement and erosion is perhaps exemplified in *Britannica* (1607), by John Ross of the Inner Temple. This collection of Latin poems recounted the Brutian histories' core narrative and demonstrates, as seen in Chapter One, a continued engagement with the histories on the part of London's lawyers (Hardin, "Geoffrey," 235). In an appended "apology," Ross offers a detailed and revealing defence of Brutian historicity as supporting James's plan for union, which would mean that "we are to be transformed from English and Scotsmen and be called Britons once more" (trans. Sutton). *Britannica* was written in Latin, and therefore did not invite a general readership.¹ Yet Ross's subsequent characterisation of public debate regarding the Brutian histories supports the argument that in early modern England, "ordinary people, especially in London, debated national political affairs" (Brown, "Monarchy," 14). The debate is presented as emotive and suffused with doubt:

For the question of whether Brutus existed or not is on all men's lips. Good God! Nowadays what is not called into question by these petty little doubts? In meetings, at banquets, in assemblies, even in barbershops men wrangle over this ... I do not desire to conjecture what any man might feel or whisper about

¹ Hardin, noting that the book was published by "the Frankfurt printer Matthias Becker," suggests that Ross believed that "his country's mythic history should be broadcast abroad, even that it might find a more learned, therefore sympathetic, reception from Continental readers" (Hardin, "Introduction," para. 5).

this thing, since I am quite familiar with the fact that nothing is ever so well-polished, nothing can be so complete, as they say, down to its very fingertips, which other men (and learned ones at that) cannot rip it to shreds. (trans. Sutton)

I am interested in the “petty little doubts,” identified by Ross, and how these might work upon those reading playbooks purporting to contain “true chronicle history”. Unlike Ross, I will conjecture what some may have been provoked to “feel or whisper” regarding these doubts. I will examine these playbooks and argue that each contains elements that could agitate existing uncertainty, much as Prescott has described Selden’s sceptical prose “illustrations” to *Poly-Olbion* (1612; see Chapter One) as eroding Drayton’s Brutan theme “from its margins like acid eating a book from its edges” (309). Hadfield describes Drayton’s “understanding of the inevitable conflicts and traumas which union has brought,” and that, as such, *Poly-Olbion* is “beset by nervous anxiety and division,” the latter quality amplified by the disparities between Drayton’s poetic text and Selden’s annotations (*Spenser* 160). Prescott’s image of erosion and Hadfield’s union context usefully support my purpose. In each play text addressed, I will isolate similar corroding agents, exploring how these may have provoked readers to reflect upon the “troubling breach in history” (Escobedo, *Nationalism* 3) exposed by the ongoing critique of the Brutan histories, even as these histories were invoked by the new monarch in order to “reunite” Britain.

In *Untimely Matter*, Harris argues for three different “temporalities of polychronic matter,” or ways in which material of the past might be seen to engage with, or have an impact upon, that of the present: “supersession, explosion, and conjunction” (20). Harris’s definitions of these terms, I think, speak to the dynamics

identified between the Brutan histories and their opponents: “If [supersession and explosion] are grounded in a difference that bestows agency on present or past but not on both – supersession seeks to silence the pagan past, explosion allows the past to speak back – [the] third temporality is grounded ... in affinity” (15-16). “Affinity,” in the case of the Brutan histories, might be the kinds of ambiguous historiographic synthesis attempted by Camden in *Britannia*, wherein doubtful history is retained for its usefulness even as its unprovability is admitted. Harris’s material temporalities, which speak to the present’s engagement with past and conflicting cultural eras, provide a model for exploring different effects and manifestations of etiological erosion. I term the first of these corrosive effects “appropriation,” for the manner in which historiographical selectivity and political expediency may be perceived as undermining the use of Brutan histories in *Basilikon Doron* and *Trivmphes of Re-united Britania*. The second effect is “dislocation,” which applies to *Leir*. The play dislocates its narrative from pre-Christian time to an unstable Christian temporality and includes amongst its characters a villain who incites the play’s key events and shares his name with the early modern era’s foremost scholar of world chronology. “Absorption” describes the ways in which the Brutan narrative of *No-body and Some-body* is suborned to its satirical subplot and repetitive language of negation. Finally, the section on “annihilation” argues that a reader sensitive to the Brutan controversy might detect in the language and action of nothingness in Q1 *King Lear* the peculiar vision of the Brutan histories themselves, personified most acutely in the figure of Lear, both perceiving and suffering the violent cancellation of these narratives from historical time.

The playbooks under consideration were published between 1605 and 1608, when questions of nationhood and “Britishness” were triggered by James VI and I’s

recent accession to the English throne. This “gave an additional impetus” to the Brutian histories (Parry, “Britons,” 156) by suggesting that James was reuniting Brute’s sundered Britain, rather than splicing together two discrete and traditionally hostile nations. James’s project “was so prominent in public discourse” that it served as a particularly potent and complex theme for playwrights (Marcus, *Puzzling* 148). This was especially fraught in an environment where, despite a rush of panegyrics and “British” materials printed after James’s accession, “the name of Britain might be on at least some men’s lips, but the concept of Britain was repugnant to their minds” (Wormald, “1603,” 29-30). James struggled with his English parliament during these years to create “Great Britain,” in an ongoing debate summarised by Conrad Russell as “one single reiterated point: the House of Commons said ‘no’ ... With each ‘no,’ James retreated to a smaller request, but the ‘no’ remained the same” (*Trevelyan* 127). I argue that the faltering progress and ultimate failure of James’s British union project may be figuratively mapped onto the nature and publication of Brutian playbooks in the period, and that this diminution in the face of intransigent resistance is echoed both in *King Lear* and in the wider cultural erosion of Brutian historicity. James, therefore, can be considered as an authorising effect upon the production and publication of “British” texts and events across his reign. Working from his engagement with the Brutian histories in the London edition of *Basilikon Doron*, it is possible to examine his selection and appropriation of historical narratives in the cause of “colonizing time [and] tenanting the past with nonexistent ancestors” (Ingledew 675). I will argue that *Basilikon Doron* exercised an authorising effect upon Munday’s 1605 Lord Mayor’s Show, *The Trivmphes of Re-vnited Britania*, which spectacularly performed the narrative of Brute and his sons before Londoners

and London's livery companies in order to configure James as a "second Brute," a term that Munday uses four times in two pages (sig. B1v-B2r).

In *Basilikon Doron*, James VI of Scotland advised his young son, Henry, to beware the dangers of dividing the realm between heirs: "by deuiding your kingdomes, yee shall leaue the seed of diuision and discord among your posteritie; as befell to this Ile, by the diuision and assignement thereof, to the three sonnes of Brutus, Locrine, Albanact, and Camber" (Fischlin and Fortier 142). It seems revealing that James would turn to the Brutan histories when considering both good rulership and the division of Britain. However, as James Shapiro has noted, the passage relating to Brute and his sons did not appear in the original version of *Basilikon Doron*, published in a limited run of seven copies in Edinburgh in 1599 (39-40). It was inserted into the English edition published in London in the wake of Elizabeth I's death in March, 1603. This suggests that the text was amended with a specifically English readership in mind, one familiar and receptive to, or believed to be familiar and receptive to, the use of Brutan history for rhetorical purposes. An examination of the background to this insertion reveals much about the political uses of history and narratives of national origin, and how, in appropriating the use of Brutan history for *Basilikon Doron*, James was not only choosing English, Brutan histories over the Scottish alternative, but was continuing a practice of negating the influence of his former tutor, George Buchanan (1506-82), of whom Williamson argues that "no single intellect from the British Isles had greater impact on the political culture of the late sixteenth century" (49). Buchanan was controversial for having argued for a model of constitutional monarchy that allowed for the deposition of bad rulers (Abbott), and for instilling this in the young James. Additionally, he was as great a proponent of Scotland's own received "ancient" history as Richard Harvey or John

Stow were of the Brutian histories, hence Harvey's attack on the long-dead Buchanan in *Philadelphus*. Accounts of Scottish antiquity shared with the Brutian histories issues of fictiveness and, despite the claim familiar of providing access to remote antiquity, these also had medieval origins. A brief survey will illustrate both the similarities with Brutian history, and the political significance of James's decision to prioritise one over the other on his accession to the English throne.

Scotland's own fictive origins had been written by John of Fordun in the late fourteenth century as a direct response to Edward I's deployment of Brutian histories to claim suzerainty over Scotland. According to Fordun, "the progenitors of the Scottish race were a Greek prince named Gathelus (the Greeks did after all defeat the Trojans!) and the eponymous Scota, daughter of Pharaoh, whom Gathelus married *circa* 1500BCE" (Mason 64). This was followed by Hector Boece's *Scotorum Historiae* (Edinburgh, 1540) which, like Geoffrey's *Historia*, claimed access to previously unknown sources in order to illuminate the most ancient Scottish history, which Fordun had left "virtually blank" (Mason 65). Boece's text subsequently served as the foundation for Buchanan's *Rerum Scotticarum Historia* (Edinburgh, 1582), which featured a sustained and furiously argued attack on the historicity of Brute, and showed the area wherein "Buchanan's critical sense deserted him entirely" in his refusal to accept that "the first seven centuries of Scottish history as retold by Boece were a fabrication" (Mason 74). This is an instance of the powerful effect that the desire, and rhetorical need, for ancient origins could have on even the most scrupulous thinkers. R.W. Bushnell notes that Buchanan may have perceived this paradox, his "humanist scholarship" (91) conflicting with his role as a "polemicist who knew the power of the argument of tradition and the usefulness of the myth" (97). Jenny Wormald has shown that Boece's writings, which featured a sequence of

forty ancient kings deposed by the Scottish people for their various evil actions, provided Buchanan with “the necessary basis for the ‘Ancient Constitution’ of Scotland, by which, ‘the people’ elected and deposed kings”; this history was used to demonstrate to Elizabeth that the Scottish people were authorised in their 1567 deposition of Mary, Queen of Scots, James’s mother (“Basilikon,” 40). The tensions present between James, Buchanan, and James’s exiled mother are usefully summarised by Wormald:

James was educated – savagely – by the man who was Mary’s most outspoken and vicious critic, and whose personal attack on her had been subsumed into a political theory which made James’s power ultimately dependent on the will of the community. (43)

James would go on to repudiate Buchanan and his “terrifying stories of what had happened to wicked kings” (Wormald, “Basilikon,” 43). In 1584, two years after Buchanan’s death, the Scottish parliament suppressed his works *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* and *De Iure Regno apud Scotos* (c. 1567; pub. Edinburgh, 1579).² This repudiation extended to Buchanan’s historiography, as James sought to construct arguments for monarchical absolutism that would have been anathema to his old tutor. To this end, James’s *True Lawe of Free Monarchies* (Edinburgh, 1598) “rewrites Scottish history” by eliminating the forty kings inserted by Boece that were so critical to Buchanan’s argument (45), turning instead to “the arguably historical figure of

² Arthur Williamson characterises *De Iure Regno apud Scotos* as “extraordinarily radical” in its challenge to monarchical power: “[d]uring the next two centuries it would be ... one of the most commonly proscribed books throughout Europe” (49).

Fergus, fifth-century king of the Scots of Dalriada” (44-45), who was said to have settled a barely-inhabited Scotland, demonstrating to James’s satisfaction that “Kinges were the authors & makers of the lawes” (Fischlin and Fortier 69).

The London edition of *Basilikon Doron* in 1603, then, with its inserted reference to Brute and his sons, incorporated into James’s public voice the rejection or suppression of two Scottish historiographies, Boece’s ancient kings and King Fergus, in favour of the Brutan histories that provided justification for British (re)union. In adopting the Brutan origins, *Basilikon Doron* prioritises English readers, and English historiography, over their Scottish counterparts. Citing an unpublished study by Peter Blayney, Wormald narrates the “dramatic” London publication of *Basilikon Doron*. Within four days of Elizabeth’s death on 24 March 1603, James’s book appeared in the Stationer’s Register, and by 13 April it is likely that eight editions were issued, with between 13,000 and 16,000 copies printed overall (“Basilikon” 51).³ One stationer, Edward Allde, was fined for pirating, whilst the official publisher, John Norton, was fined for overcharging (“Basilikon” 51). The book was phenomenally successful, suggesting that “Londoners were busily reading it for clues about the new king” (Goldberg 55). However, whilst James Forse has argued *Basilikon Doron* provides evidence that “James knew his legendary British history” (56), I suggest that the insertion of the Lochrine reference also invites the possibility of collaborative intervention. The publisher John Norton was a “friend to [Robert] Cecil,” Elizabeth’s Secretary of State and a possible recipient of the Edinburgh edition of *Basilikon Doron* used as copy for the London editions (Wormald, “Basilikon,” 51). James’s

³ This was a huge print run in comparison with those given to playbooks and other non-official printed books, which were restricted by guild regulations to a “maximum press run of 1,250 to 1,500 copies for most editions” (Farmer and Lesser 17-18).

manuscript for *Basilikon Doron* shows that, amongst its many crossings-out and amendments, there is no mention of Brute or Lochrine.⁴ Thus the insertion of Brute's narrative may have been at the suggestion, or even the instigation, of Cecil or the text's London stationers, creating perhaps the most widely disseminated episode of Brutan history in early modern print. *Basilikon Doron* was translated into thirty languages (51), the Welsh edition including a preface foregrounding its Brutan context (McManus, "Nation," 189). Clare McManus notes that *Basilikon Doron* in London represented "a statement of the political beliefs of the incoming king written in the language of his new subjects," rather than the Middle Scots of his original manuscript ("Nation" 189). It was also adapted to appeal to the perceived historical consciousness of James's new subjects; and when a historical analogue was sought that might resonate with English readers, the Brutan histories were favoured. In the aftermath of accession, this recourse to apparently outmoded but identifiably English, rather than Scottish, historiography would have a powerful effect on playmakers and stationers although, as I will show, by the time many of these texts began appearing in print from 1605, James's union project had stalled in parliament. In 1604, however, the influence and re-emergence of Brutan themes in the service of the new Jacobean regime was immediately visible in the response of civic pageant writers to James's accession. Even here, however, a theme emerges in which the celebratory use of Brutan history in pageant performance is undermined in print by paratextual intervention.

The entertainments prepared for James's royal entry into London in 1604 were, as Parry notes, "dense with meaning" and detail "extravagantly superfluous to

⁴ Royal MS 18 B XV (fol. 23v, ll. 12-14).

the occasion” (*Golden* 3). Thomas Dekker and Ben Jonson wrote speeches and pageants for the event, publishing their contributions so that they might be understood by readers (Parry, *Golden* 3) in ways impossible amidst the noise and street-level hubbub of a public show. Neither text foregrounds Brutan themes although Brute is clearly indicated as a source of James’s legitimacy by Dekker, who has the allegorical figure Circumspection speak of James wearing a “triple Diadem, / Weying more than that of thy grand Grandsire Brute” (sig. F1v), and there is a reference to Brute’s division of Britain (sig. I1r). Jonson’s text is more circumspect, only featuring a passing reference to “Brutus plough” (sig. B3r). The printed edition of Jonson’s contribution, *B. Ion: His Part of King Iames His Royall and Magnificent Entertainment* (1604), demonstrates how an author or stationer might engineer a different reception in print for a text conceived for performance. Jonson’s crabbed marginal annotations highlight a scholarly discomfort with Brutan themes that would, on the evidence of the printed dialogue, have been absent from the pageant’s performance:

Rather then the Citie shuld want a Founder, we choose to folowe the receiu'd story of *Brute*, whether fabulous, or true, and not altogether vnwarranted in Poetrie: since it is a fauor of Antiquity to few cities, to let them know their first Authors. (sig. B3r)

If this disclaimer, or justification, for his passing reference to Brute, echoes that of Camden in *Britannia*, it may be significant that Camden had been Jonson’s much-admired tutor at Westminster College (Parry, “Britons,” 157), further testament to the effects of textual community on Brutan belief. Jonson’s annotation is another

demonstration of the intellectual discomfort engendered when confronted by an etiology that, whilst triggering Ross's "little doubts," was popular, emotive, and, most importantly, singularly *useful* to the Jacobean moment. The latter position was, arguably, taken by Munday for *The Trivmphes of Re-vnited Britania*. As Hill notes, Lord Mayor's Shows were "*public* events, witnessed by thousands" (*Pageantry* 4), and "some of their more spectacular qualities far exceeded those that the playhouses were able to stage" (118); thus *Trivmphes*, in terms of the size of its audience and the material resources employed to bring it to life, was perhaps the most spectacular early modern performance of Brutan history.

In some ways, *Trivmphes* was a strange occasion for a focus on James's accession and British union. A celebration of the investiture of the Merchant Taylor Sir Leonard Holliday as Lord Mayor of London, it was a civic, rather than a royal event; local, rather than national. James himself was represented in the Show by an empty chair (Hill, "Representing," 23). As Manley notes, "[t]he history of London street pageantry is practically identical with the history of collaboration and conflict between the twin jurisdictions of the Crown and the City" (*Literature* 216), and *Trivmphes*, in using the occasion of the Lord Mayor's investiture to apparently endorse and amplify both James's union project and the Brutan historiography used in *Basilikon Doron*, ably demonstrates this performative negotiation. It continued and enlarged the civic tradition, explored in Chapter Two, of performing Brutan founders as mediating figures between civic authorities and monarchs, particularly in the context of acknowledging regime change.

Trivmphes features an entry led by "*Corineus* and *Goemagot*, appearing in the shape and proportion of huge Giants" (sig. B1r), perhaps the traditional pageant figures so familiar to Londoners, bound with "chaines of golde" (sig. B1r) and

drawing behind them a “Mount triangular,” or what appears to have been a pyramid-shaped pageant representing Britain, upon the tiers of which stood children costumed as figures of Brutus etiology. A sense of historiographic integrity, of presenting these figures as emerging from a different time and place is evident in Brute’s costuming “in the habite of an aduenturous warlike *Trojan*” (sig. B1v). He also echoes older entertainments’ tropes of simultaneous lurking presence and resurrection, “after so long slumbring in our toombes / Such multitudes of yeares, rich poesie / That does reuiue vs to fill vp these roomes” (sig. B3v). As Philip Schwyzer notes, “there are two separate resurrections heralded here: that of Brutus and his kin, who are awakened from death ... and that of Britain itself” (“Jacobean,” 37). Brute is performed alongside his three sons, also costumed “in their antique estates” (sig. B2r) and “female representations” (sig. B1v) of their kingdoms, Loegria, Cambria, and Albania, as well as children representing Britannia, Troya Nova, and the rivers Humber, Savarne, and Thamesis. Regrettably, no record remains of the costumes for these figures – and thus the manner in which the ancient regions and waterways of Britain were visually personated. The three kingdoms, as Munday explains in his description of the “Pageant,” serve to “reproue [Brute], for his ouermuch fond loue to his sons, and deuiding” Britain into three (sig. B1v), and take turns recounting the events of Locrine’s reign. The princes themselves speak next, Albanacht, representing Scotland, serving as an agent introducing James to England: “I bring that Monarch now into the field, / With peace and plenty in his sacred hand” (sig. B4r). The visual effect of the pyramid-shaped pageant, which was large enough to hold twelve children, must have been impressive, with each figure speaking from their tiered positions and creating a cumulative sense of founders and landscape, speaking in many voices in the service of unity. However, as Hill notes, Savarne and Thamesis’s

description of James as “great Britaines King” (sig. B4v), performed and printed at the end of 1605, might have served less as a compliment and more a “reminder that the English parliament were still refusing to countenance the title” (“Representing,” 20). These performed territories literalise and multiply the notion of embodied founder and landscape explored in chapter two, albeit in a celebratory register that almost duplicates *Locrine’s dramatis personae* and recounts its narrative whilst inverting its suicidal tragedy. All of this is to the purpose of repeatedly proclaiming James a “second Brute” (sig. B1v-B2r; sig. B3v; sig. B4v; sig. C3r). *Trivmphes*, perhaps, can make this comparison without risking the insinuation that James will repeat Brute’s perceived error of dividing his kingdom precisely because this is the very mistake identified and highlighted in *Basilikon Doron*. In performance, this endorsement and its supporting historiography are presented as joyous and unequivocal. In print, Brutian origins are compromised by Munday himself.

The printed edition of *Trivmphes* is testament to the importance of textual communities in determining attitudes to the Brutian histories and, like Jonson’s annotations to *The Magnificent Entertainment*, it uses paratextual intervention in order to mediate between the reader and perceived historicity. Hill notes that Munday “was a writer whose career regularly demonstrates his willingness to exploit any chance that came his way,” and as such he might be expected to “trade explicitly on ... the union of nations that the king hoped his reign would bring about” (“Representing” 18). This is doubly true when Munday was writing at the behest of his own livery company, the Merchant Taylors, although *Trivmphes* might also be considered as a possible oblique “audition” for royal patronage on Munday’s part. Hill suggests that there appears to be “a degree of congruence between the number of copies of Shows printed ... and the number of livery members of the Companies that commissioned

them” (*Pageantry* 220). This raises the possibility that *Trivmphes*, in its printed form, served as either a programme for, or memento of, the performance for a tightly specific textual community, one that appears to have endorsed and exploited the Brutan histories. Munday claims that his introduction, a retelling of the Brute story taken “virtually *verbatim*” from Holinshed (Dutton 141) – and therefore, the subject matter it seeks to gloss – was “earnestly solicited,” in order to address the “variable opinions” relating to ancient Britaine:

Because our present conceit, reacheth vnto the antiquitie of *Brytaine*, which (in many mindes) hath carried as many and variable opinions: I thought it not vnneccessary, (being thereto earnestly solicited) to speake somewhat concerning the estate of this our Countrey. (sig. A2r)

This seems to allude to the tone of debate described by Ross, and Munday’s confusing syntax usefully invokes the historical dissonance induced by contemplation of the Brutan histories. In emphasising historical dissonance, *Trivmphes* in print potentially represents a far more compromised and dissonant version of Brutan history than the performed version. It might be read that there are “many and variable opinions” carried in the “many mindes” of numerous individuals or, both additionally and alternatively, that each of these “mindes” carries churning within it “many and variable opinions,” that is, multiple and unstable historiographic positions. Richard Dutton argues that Munday focussed on Brutan tropes because their “allusions and the symbolism were part of the common discourse of the time” (143). That discourse, as Munday and Ross attest, was troubled by doubt, even as it was appropriated in order to celebrate and address the new monarch; although this doubt seems to have been

available primarily to consumers of print, rather than performance. If Hill is correct, and copies of Munday's text were distributed to guild members present at the performance of *Trivmphes*, this would have been a vivid example of the complex interactions of Brutan history in print and performance, as determined by textual community. Spectators viewing the pageant alone would experience an unequivocal endorsement of Brutan history and its meaning for, and connections with, the present moment. Those with access to the text, however, would experience the same spectacle but in part through the print lens of Munday's equivocal prose introduction, opening guild members' minds to doubt even as the Brutan celebration they had paid for was enacted.

Authorising *Trivmphes* and its Brutan-friendly audience of Merchant Taylors and London citizens, is *Basilikon Doron*, itself a product of historiographic filtration, selective remembrance, and propagandistic appropriation. I suggest that the doubts and vagaries surrounding union may have fed back into the "little doubts" and "variable opinions" regarding the Brutan histories. These concerns, then, might also have encompassed the perceived historicity of the material presented in *Leir, No-body and Some-body*, and *King Lear*. Doubt in one, in other words, perhaps agitated doubt in the others: more so, perhaps, if these playbooks could be read as something approaching a coherent literary grouping. To argue that this might have been the case, the following section addresses the possible consequences for readers of these playbooks and their shared title-page designation as "true chronicle history".

In his study of the paradoxes and problems faced by those early modern historiographers addressing Britain's ancient past, Escobedo notes that "English nationhood ... was linked to a perception of historical loss," and that despite the era's "explosion of historical writing ... much of this writing registered a profound sense

that the English past was missing and unrecoverable” (*Nationalism* 3). My emphasis in the following sections is slightly different, focusing not precisely on the loss of history, but on the dissonance and instability that accompanies the apprehension of such a loss, how these experiences might be triggered by reading a play and, further, that this etiological erosion was encountered in the context of an emergent and often resisted “British” future. Before addressing the anonymous *Leir*, *No-body and Some-body*, and Shakespeare’s *King Lear* separately in terms of the erosive qualities outlined at the beginning of this chapter, I will argue that the publication of each contributed to a recognisable micro-genre of Jacobean printed drama, that of the Brutan “true chronicle history”. This phrase only appears on the title pages of five Jacobean playbooks, all of which address British history. Of these five, four address ancient British history, three address Brutan history. “True chronicle history” also appears on the title-page of the 1610 edition of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, which also features Brutan material. The four playbooks include the plays named above and *The Valiant Welshman* (1615), attributed on the title page to “R.A.” and set in the post-Brutan Roman-British period. I will address *Leir*, *No-body and Some-body*, and *King Lear* in turn, connecting the political and historiographic controversies of the early Jacobean era and identifying for each text aspects of print presentation, characterisation, and language that may for readers have triggered or exacerbated doubts regarding the Brutan histories. I conclude that each playbook, intentionally or otherwise, corrodes and destabilises the material and characters promoted by the playbooks’ publishers as representing “true chronicle history”.

To examine these plays within the Jacobean moment is to uproot the earliest of them, *Leir*, from the conditions of its earliest recorded performance in 1594, when it was recorded as “king leare” by Henslowe (Foakes, *Henslowe’s* 21), and to examine

it instead as a 1605 Jacobean playbook, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*. Much work has been done, by Zachary Lesser and others, on how stationers' priorities differed from those of playwrights, and how a play written and performed in one era may be published at a later time to very different purpose and effect. For example, Lesser asks, of the 1633 edition of *The Jew of Malta*, why that play was revived or republished in that particular moment (*Renaissance* 81). Similarly, why did stationers between 1605 and 1615 choose to publish Brutus plays at all – particularly the more-than-decade-old *Leir*? Lesser promotes the role played by print in investigating readership, arguing that it is possible to move “from the readings that publishers imagine,” when they select which texts to invest in, “to the meanings that their customers made out of these books” (*Renaissance* 17-18). A focus on publication when addressing the present sequence of plays is supported by their shared title-page designation, “true chronicle history”. This generic designation has usually only been addressed by critics in relation to *King Lear*. Cyndia Susan Clegg argues that it is “no accident of the printing house” that *Lear* is presented as “his true chronicle history,” which is “clearly” intended to imply that *Leir* does not represent the true account (171); and Forse argues that this suggests Shakespeare, or the stationer, was positioning *King Lear* as an alternative or correction to *Leir* (61). Both arguments are possible, although the title page might also be read as suggesting that this is Shakespeare's singular “version” of the narrative, and as such perhaps even tacitly acknowledging and legitimising Shakespeare's many deviations from “true chronicle history” as represented in the Brutus histories, such as Cordelia predeceasing her father. Also, the category is more populous than Forse and Clegg suggest; *King Lear* was the fourth playbook in six years to receive this categorisation.

The designation first appears on the title page of the anonymous *The True Chronicle Historie of the Whole Life and Death of Thomas Lord Cromwell*, a Lord Chamberlain's Men play published by William Jones in 1602 and, like *Locrine*, attributed to W.S.⁵ There seems little to connect *Cromwell* to *Leir*, the second play to carry the designation, beyond a few similarities of action.⁶ Yet *Leir*'s stationer, John Wright, who would come to know William Jones, since he purchased the rights to the popular *Mucedorus* from Jones's widow in 1618 (McKerrow 160), seems to have looked to Jones's *Cromwell* when preparing *Leir*, his first published playbook. That Nathaniel Butter's quarto of *King Lear* sits in the same tradition, or even derived the designation from Wright's playbook, is a reasonable conclusion. However, it should be noted that John Trundle's 1606 Brutan playbook of *No-body, and Some-body, With the True Chronicle Historie of Elydure* could also have provided Butter with an additional source, and a sense of an emerging print subgenre. In every case, the playbook title page differs from the titles recorded in the Stationers' Register.⁷ Failure to distinguish between corresponding entries in the Stationers' Register and a

⁵ Investigations into *Cromwell*'s possible authorship have proven inconclusive. These are outlined in detail by Will Sharpe (680-88).

⁶ Like *Leir*, *Cromwell* features a father decrying his child's perceived indifference to paternal wellbeing (sig. A2v-A3r), and a comic character and an aristocrat exchanging clothes for the purposes of disguise (sig. C4v), continental adventures, an onstage banquet (sig. D2r), and an estranged child kneeling before their father despite being in higher fortune (sig. E2v).

⁷ *Leir* was registered, though never published, in 1594, as "The moste famous Chronicle historye of Leire kinge of England" and then in 1605 as "A booke called the Tragecall historie of Kinge Leir" (DEEP ref. 390); *Cromwell* was registered in 1602 as "A booke called the lyfe & Deathe of the Lord Cromwell" (DEEP ref. 332); *No-body and Some-body* was registered as "A booke called no bodie and somme bodie &ces" (DEEP ref. 425); and in 1607 *King Lear* was registered as "A booke called. M^r William Shakespeare his historye of Kynge Lear" (DEEP ref. 517).

playbook's title-pages can mislead.⁸ What this suggests, I argue, is that in each case the genre designation "true chronicle history" was chosen by the stationers over the titles inherited from the copy texts they had received, or at least as these are recorded in the Stationers' Register. It may be a coincidence that these plays share both this unique genre designation and Brutan subject matter, although it is suggestive that the 1610 edition of the *Mirror For Magistrates*, which opens with John Higgins's account of the Brutan histories, seems to have appropriated this term, suggesting that by this time "true chronicle history" might, either for historiographic or commercial reasons, have held Brutan associations. Finally, in 1615 *the Valiant Welshman* was entered in the Stationers' Register as "a play called the valiant welshman" (DEEP ref. 619) then published as *The Valiant Welshman, or The True Chronicle History of the Life and Valiant Deedes of Caradoc the Great*, a play presenting a fantastical concoction of early British and Roman history. Thus, buyers of playbooks, seeing the term "true chronicle history," might have come to anticipate Brutan themes. This focus on historical truth seems ironic, a triple tautology, protesting too much perhaps, given the wider historiographic controversy and erosive effect of certain aspects of these plays' content and presentation. This creates a sequence of interconnected texts manifesting the process by which the Brutan histories became exiled from historicity, and "banished from the library to the chimney corner" (Morse 123) at the precise moment that they were being adopted by proponents of British union. I argue that the first of

⁸ For example, in *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, McMillin and MacLean make much of that company's emphasis of "truth" over "poetry," in their Elizabethan historical drama, citing the titles of "*The True Tragedy of Richard III*, or the *True Chronicle History of King Leir*" (33). *Leir*, however, was not recorded under that name until the playbook title page in 1605, challenging the usefulness of this evidence to McMillan and MacLean's otherwise persuasive argument.

these playbooks, *Leir*, erodes Brutan historicity by dislocating its action from antiquity into the Christian epoch.

Leir

Chronologies and Brutan timelines were invaluable to James VI and I's self-legitimation and to historicising his union project. In 1605, the year the anonymous *Leir* was published, the genealogist Thomas Lyte was working on an illustrated table of epic scale "comprising nine parchment skins ... over two metres wide and almost two metres high" that traced the Stuart ancestry from Brute and included a depiction of the temple of Janus said to have been founded by Lear (de Guevara). Lyte's table shows the importance of situating forbears and ancestors securely within chronological space if they were to offer meaning and authority in the present. In contrast to this anchoring of King Lear's narrative within the Brutan-Jacobean timeline, *Leir* slips into a state of uncertain temporality. This is characterised by the play's pervasive Christian references, anachronisms that erode its title-page's claim to "true chronicle history". One quality of erosion is that the entity being eroded gradually fragments into smaller and smaller drifting pieces. To present King Lear as a fragment, dislocated from the history into which he was believed to be embedded, is to open the reader to the experience of etiological erosion.

In this section I argue that for *Leir*'s early Jacobean readers the play's dislocation of its Brutan narrative from the apparatus of world chronology - and thus from the continuity of royal descent - held the potential to trigger the "little doubts" in Brutan historicity explored throughout this chapter. Further, I argue that for some readers the notion that these doubts were integral to reading the play may have been compounded by the presence of the character Skalliger who, in a correlation that has

gone almost unnoticed in later criticism, shares his name with two scholars, Julius Caesar Scaliger and his son Joseph Scaliger; the latter being, tellingly, the era's foremost scholar and collator of world chronology. Whether intended by the anonymous playwrights or not, I will suggest that these associations were available even to non-specialist readers, who could have encountered references to both Scaligers in a wide variety of texts. First, however, the following paragraphs offer a synopsis of the familiar narrative of King Lear and an overview of the available evidence regarding *Leir*'s Elizabethan performances and Jacobean publication. This reiteration is invited by the story's familiarity deriving for many from Shakespeare's *King Lear*, a play that alters the chronicle events in significant ways. The genre, dramaturgy, and perhaps the appearance in print of *Leir* reflect its narrative debt to Brutus history as well as its usefulness as a story of a father and daughter happily united.⁹

The story of King Lear and the disastrous results of his decision to test his daughters' love and divide his kingdom receive more detail than many others in the earlier Brutus histories' pre-Christian narratives, attributing dialogue and personal reflection to its characters whilst others such as Brutus are described principally in terms of their, usually martial or libidinous, actions. This special treatment appears in Caxton (1480), who in turn was reproducing the prose *Brut*, meaning that from its first appearance in print Lear's story stands out as material inviting verbal engagement and dramatic adaptation. Lear is even offered a form of soliloquy,

⁹ This is the traditional narrative that was the source for both *Leir* and *King Lear*. Recent studies examining the connections between the two plays, including in terms of authorship, include Foakes (ed.), *King Lear* (1998); Knowles ("Shakespeare" 2002); Brink (2008); and Forse (2014).

recognising his own folly in having misunderstood his youngest daughter's rejection of his test; a process of burgeoning and agonistic self-knowledge that is so central to both Lear plays:

Allas nowe to long haue I lyuet that this sorwe and meschief is to me nowe
falle For nowe am I porer that some tyme was riche but nowe haue I no frende
ne kyn that me wull do any good ... nowe I wote well that Cordeill my
yongeste doughter said me trougth when she said as moche as I had so moche
shold I bene beloued. (sig. B1r-v)

All versions of the narrative follow, with variations, the same thread: Lear, having cast off Cordelia, marrying her without dowry to the king of France – or Gallia, in classical terminology – pledges that upon his death he will divide Britain between the husbands of his two elder daughters, the dukes of Cornwall and Albania, or Scotland. Impatient for power, the dukes rebel and depose Lear, who, friendless and destitute, escapes to France. Throwing himself on Cordelia's mercy, father and daughter are reunited and retake Britain; the crown returns to Lear. Following his death, Cordelia rules for five years before being deposed by her nephews, Morgan and Cunedagus. Imprisoned and despairing, Cordelia commits suicide. *Leir* broadly follows this narrative up to Lear and Cordelia's re-conquest of Britain, and the play's key literary sources have been shown to be, perhaps predictably, the *Mirror for Magistrates*, *Albions England*, and *The Faerie Queene* (Law, "Tripartite Gaul," 44).

Grace Ioppolo notes that box office takings for the 1594 Rose performance of *Leir* were "better than average" compared to plays performed at the same period (166). These performances were undertaken by an expanded company, comprising the

Queen's and Sussex's Men shortly after the brief residency when Sussex's performed *King Lude* (Foakes, *Henslowe's* 20). A play about King Lear was registered by Edward White for publication on 14 May 1594 (Knowles, "Shakespeare," 29), only weeks after the Rose performance, suggesting that the performed and registered plays represent the same text: White "is likely to have had ties with the professional companies" (Brink 210). If the play was published in 1594 then no extant copy remains and it was only in 1605 that, as the Stationer's Register records, the play was re-entered, first to Simon Stafford, before being reassigned to John Wright, Edward White's former apprentice (210). *Leir* was John Wright's first published playbook (Michie 5), and as noted he may have looked for guidance to William Jones's *Cromwell* (1602), adopting the title-page's "true chronicle history" generic designation.

Reiterating Lesser's question regarding a playbook, "why does it exist?" (*Renaissance* 81), I ask why Wright chose this particular old play as his inaugural dramatic venture. Referring to the title page's claim that the play had been "sundry times lately acted" (sig. A1r), Clegg admits that "[w]e cannot be certain why *Leir* was currently being revived in print and, likely in repertory, but there seems to have been some interest in history plays around this time" (17). It is possible that a play treating the Brutus histories might have been considered a newly fresh property following *Basilikon Doron's* reference to Brutus's division of Britain. Foreshadowing *Trivmphes*, *Leir* as a Jacobean text presents both the division and happy reunification of Britain. Perhaps this was enough to prompt both the possible revival in performance and Wright's edition. James's struggle with parliament to bring about the union of England and Scotland seems to have been in a hiatus in 1605, and a parliament that had "originally been prorogued to 7 February 1605" was further postponed, possibly

in order to avoid the embarrassment of admitting to the king's financial difficulties (Russell, *Trevelyan* 43). In October, James abandoned a plan to make union a key focus of the new parliament, due to the recalcitrance of both the Scottish and English parliaments (46). Upon reopening in November, any anticipated order of parliamentary business was, figuratively, blown to pieces by the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot. This became the urgent subject of James's only speech to Parliament that year and, for 1606, Russell notes that "the entire failure of the Union to appear in the public business ... is one of the key facts" of that year's parliament (46). Thus, whilst union was in the air, as manifested in *Trivmphes*, it was not in motion. There is, however, an additional parallel that may connect this play to the Jacobean moment, if not in fact then at least within the field of possible allusions available to its first readers.

In 1605, King James and Queen Anna's daughter, Mary, was born. Mary was not only the first Stuart born in England, but the first English royal birth since 1537, triggering widespread celebration, expressed in bonfires lit by London's citizens and bells ringing throughout the day (Brown, "Vanishing," 69-70). Mary's birth was a major event both locally in London and nationally, but has received little attention in the context of the formative years of the Jacobean era, despite being considered significant enough, as Barroll mentions, to be recorded, along with a lengthy account of her baptism, in the 1615 continuation of Stow's *Annals* (f. 862-64). Public prayers, first for Anna's safe delivery and then in thanks for Mary's birth, were published for reading aloud in churches (Carney 59). Barroll has stressed the theatrical qualities of the rituals surrounding the birth, from the extraordinary cost of Anna's lying-in bed to James's immediate commissioning of the tombs of both Queen Elizabeth and "his decapitated mother" (105) after whom the child was named, thus sublimating those

monarchs, symbols of a divided past, through the advent of newborn “British” royalty. On the fifth of May, Mary was “carried down from the queen’s apartments” at Greenwich palace, and “through the hall where the king was” before being taken to the chapel by a crowd of bishops, barons and peers for baptism (Barroll 106). Three days later, *Leir* was registered for publication. At the time, this optimistic play about the estrangement and reunion of a pious British king and his beloved youngest daughter may have seemed serendipitously appropriate. Cordella’s exemplary filial virtues are signalled throughout. Before her first entrance the envious Gonorill complains that Cordella is “so nice and so demure; / So sober, courteous, modest, and precise” (sig. A3r). Cordella’s pious humility is demonstrated in her claim to the disguised king of Gallia that “[m]y mind is low ynough to loue a Palmer, / Rather then any King vpon the earth” (sig. C3r). Here, virtue is conventionally, and lightly, expressed. Yet a more powerful demonstration of Cordella’s significance appears in Leir’s description of a terrifying dream, from which he awakes in the moment before a murderer, employed by Ragan and Gonorill, makes an attempt upon his life:

Me thought, my daughters, Gonorill & Ragan,
Stood both before me with such grim aspects,
Eche brandishing a Faulchion in their hand,
Ready to lop a lymme off where it fell,
And in their other hands a naked poynyard,
Wherwith they stabd me in a hundred places,
And to their thinking left me there for dead:
But then my youngest daughter, fayre Cordella,

Came with a boxe of Balsome in her hand,
And powred it into my bleeding wounds,
By whose good meanes I was recouered well,
In perfit health, as earst I was before. (sig. F1v)

Leir's dream, which seems at first to offer prophetic confirmation of Leir's death, aligning it with similar dreams assigned to historical play characters such as that of the Duchess of Gloucester in *Woodstock* (c. 1610-11) and *Julius Caesar*'s Calpurnia, suddenly alters its tone, configuring Cordella as bearing miraculous and restorative force. Having been stabbed in "a hundred places" by his two wicked daughters, Leir is revived by Cordella's act of pouring balsam into his wounds; for a reader in 1605 sensitive both to James's struggle for union and the symbolic power of a new "British" princess, *Leir* may have seemed particularly apposite and Mary/Cordella a key symbol of such renewal. Reunited, Cordella and Leir vie for one another's forgiveness, each repeatedly kneeling before the other. Leir asserts that it is "my part to kneele, / And aske forgiuenesse for my former faults," and Cordella's response, "O, if you wish I should inioy my breath, / Deare father rise, or I receiue my death" (sig. H4r), creates a sense of not only filial duty, but of mutual restoration and ascension. Leir must "rise" that Cordella can live; and Leir's later reply that, in welcoming him back Cordella "gaue life to me" (sig. H4r), speaks not only of his own life, but of the understanding that a king's life, and afterlife, depend upon the character and vitality of his heirs. Leir and Cordella mutually strengthen and renew one another in ways that may have spoken to readers in the months after Mary's birth when, symbolically at least, a sense of British renewal was embodied in the new princess. If the play's action resonated with events close to its publication, the present rather than the remote

past, then its Christian setting also served to distance the narrative from history, estranging these characters from the chronicles' inexorable movement towards Cordella's eventual defeat and suicide. If so, this also rendered *Leir* uncanny and untimely, as the following examination of its temporal dislocation will suggest.

Like *Locrine* and *Gorboduc*, *Leir* may digress or adapt but always ends in realignment with the Brutan histories' genealogical continuity. However, the play extracts itself wholesale from wider accounts of the pre-Christian world, a concatenation of international historiographies known as "universal history," representing the "scholarly desire to impose some kind of order, some rational time scheme" (Ferguson 147) upon world history. This macro-narrative, into which English writers of historiographic texts had been careful to embed the Brutan histories, accommodated biblical, classical, and national narratives, and many historiographic texts provided marginal timelines or commentary that worked to situate a particular narrative within this wider context. For example, Holinshed anchors Lear, along with all Brutan kings, within universal chronology, stating that he ruled "in the yeare of the world 3105, at what time Ioas reigned in Iuda" (1587: I, *Hist.* 12). This is visually represented in the paratext of Thomas Cooper's *Chronicle* (1549), which harmonises its narrative with various temporal perspectives via marginal timelines; from the creation of the world, the years before Christ's birth and, suggestively, the years "Before Britayn knowen" (f. 32v), implying - despite the record of pre-Christian Brutan histories - that Britain was in some way "unknown" before the Roman invasions.

I suggest that, in uprooting its narrative from this accepted chronology, *Leir* predisposes its reader to contemplate the historiographic fragility of Brutan time. Biblical and Christian references infuse *Leir*'s language and temporality with the

same insistence as *Locrine*'s relentless classical allusions and references to Locrine and Guendolen's wedding in the "temple of Concordia" (sig. C2r), or the clown Strumbo's dwelling by the temple of Mercury (sig. D3r), situate it within a pre-Christian, pagan time and landscape.¹⁰ Additionally, there will always be anachronisms, large and small, that are better attributed to playmakers' haste or imperfect knowledge than to authorial strategy, such as Gloucester's use of "spectacles" in *King Lear* (Q1; sig. C1v). Stuart Piggott has argued that the "propensity of early writers (and illustrators) to project the modern into the ancient world without any sense of what came to be known as anachronism, is a commonplace" (44). This is certainly true, but nonetheless I suggest that *Leir*, which does not so much "bring the modern into the ancient world" as parachute the ancient and pagan into the Christian world, profoundly compromises the play's status as "true chronicle history". Christian imagery permeates the play, and Christian thinking drives its characters' behaviour and understanding of their world.

Leir's good counsellor, Perillus, calls upon "iust Iehoua, whose almighty power / Doth gouerne all things in this spacious world" (sig. F3v). Biblical references are precise rather than generalised. Leir compares an unexpected banquet to "the blessed Manna, / That raynd from heauen amongst the Israelites" (sig. H2v-H3r) and, upon being reconciled with Cordella, offers her the same "blessing, which the God of *Abraham* gaue / Vnto the trybe of *Iuda*" (sig. H4v). These Old Testament references could be argued to still, loosely, situate *Leir* within a pre-Christian,

¹⁰ Whilst *Locrine*'s frequent recourse to classical allusion is perhaps unremarkable in its context as a play of the early 1590s, the barrage is singularly intense. For example, a twenty-line passage spoken by Corineus includes references to Rhodamanth, Euridies, Crebus, Pluto, Mors (Death), Tantalus, Pelops, Fleithonus, Minos, Jupiter, Mars, and Tisiphone (sig. K1v-K2r), the unknown author(s) not letting a scrap of erudition go to waste.

internationalist, Britain. Yet the characters exhibit explicitly Christian behaviour and references. Leir pledges to “take me to my prayers and my beads,” in the care of his daughters, “the kindest Gyrls in Christen dome” (sig. C1r). The play’s engagement with Christianity extends to referencing post-biblical figures such as “Saint *Denis*, and Saint *George*” (sig. I3r), patron saints of Paris and England respectively and, as referenced by the King of Gallia in preparation for battle to restore Leir to his throne, represent the two powers united both by his marriage to Cordella and their joint support of Leir’s cause. Thus, the play’s references to post-Brutan, and post-biblical, Christianity are not mere decoration, but often offer thematic commentary. Threatened with the murders of himself and Perillus, Leir calls his friend his “Damion” (sig. F2r), a possible reference to the saints Cosmas and Damian, whose legend claimed that they were twins executed by the Romans in the days of the early church (Farmer 122). Taking in both Catholic doctrine and early modern Protestant caricature, Gonorill calls Cordella a “Puritan” and threatens to “make you wish your selfe in Purgatory” (sig. I3v); to present the wicked Goneril as adopting a term of abuse used towards those perceived as radical Protestants transports these Brutan figures into, and defines them via, the sectarian milieux and schisms of post-Reformation England. The more persistently *Leir*’s characters adopt the language of early modern Christianity, the more estranged they become from the historical moment they are meant to inhabit. In these ways, *Leir* dislocates Brutan time from its pre-Christian chronology. This may be assessed as merely an extreme example of the early modern propensity for anachronism outlined above; but I suggest that for many readers of the 1605 playbook, the presence of the minor character Skalliger may have both pulled focus towards the play’s temporal dislocation and invited a dissonant historiographic reading.

Lord Skalliger, a character inserted into *Leir*'s Brutal plot by its playmakers, is a meddling, villainous advisor. He is textually prominent, the only character other than Leir to speak and be named on the play's opening page, meaning that the material text initially prioritises his presence and name before that of the other characters. Skalliger's first action is to propose the love test, that Leir should reward his daughters "[a]s is their worth, to them that love profess" (sig. A2v), before rushing off to "bewray your [Leir's] secrecy" to Gonerill and Ragan (sig. A3r). Thus Skalliger "betrays Leir's confidence [and] it is Skalliger, not Leir, who supports giving a larger portion to the daughter who wins the love contest" (Brink 214). By instigating and manipulating the love test, Skalliger triggers the play's "historical" events, making Cordella "entirely the victim of her unscrupulous sisters' jealousy and the conniving of Lord Skalliger" (218). Skalliger makes one further, brief, appearance, advising Gonerill to halve the allowance given for her father's upkeep. His final words before disappearing from the play are

And me a villain, that to curry favour
Have given the daughter counsel 'gainst the father
But us the world doth this experience give,
That he that cannot flatter, cannot live. (sig. C4v)

Skalliger's influence over the defining events of Leir's reign, then, is huge. He schemes up the love test, the elder sisters' decision to dissemble in order to gain more than Cordella, and the reducing of Leir's allowance. His interventions are almost authorial, directing, even creating, events purporting to be historical. A self-declared villain and flatterer, his mobility and the effectiveness of his villainy begs the question

of why this character has been inserted into a Brutan chronicle play, and why he shares his name with two renowned early modern scholars. Apart from Sidney Lee's 1909 edition of the play (xxxiv), critics have rarely noted, and never explored, the relationship between *Leir* and Julius Caesar Scaliger, or his son Joseph Scaliger. Yet by drawing attention to a "villain" sharing these scholars' name, *Leir* also draws attention to its temporal dissonance.

The possible influence of the Scaligers, as French scholars, upon *Leir* suggests evidence of an interaction between continental historiographic thought, popular drama, and Brutan history. Clare McManus has stressed the importance, when considering "British" culture, of remembering that "although it came late to the Renaissance, in its 'high' cultural form at least, Britain consciously based its self-expression upon an idea of learning and a value system from beyond its own borders" ("Nation" 187). *Leir*'s Skalliger could have been interpreted by certain readers as displaying, and perhaps satirising, just such an influence. Julius Caesar Scaliger was a theorist of poetics and "the most notorious of Renaissance categorizers" (Orgel, "Drama," 113). His *Poetices Libri Septem* (Lyons, 1581) sought to define and assert rules regarding literary and poetic genre. Scaliger's work was praised and referenced in Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poesie* (c. 1580; pub. 1595), and Stephen Orgel has noted both writers' resistance to drama:

Scaliger and Sidney are eloquent on the wonders of poetry, but neither is capable of the minimally imaginative effort required by plays which ignore the unities of place or time. Sidney calls such plays preposterous, Scaliger calls them lies. (115)

Leir's Skalliger may have appeared to some as a playmakers' rebuke against such "limited" critiques of drama, pertinent to a play that, disregarding "unities of place and time," relocated itself from one temporality to another. Julius Caesar Scaliger was often referenced as an authority in English print before the publication of *Leir*, configuring him as an expert on poetics. For example, Abraham Fraunce's *The Arcadian Rhetorike* (1588) cites Scaliger as an authority on the variants and uses of alliteration (sig. E4v), whilst John Rainolds's antitheatrical tract *Th'overthrow of Stage-plays* cites Scaliger's approving use of a quote from Plinie to the effect that drama might be "recited ... but not played" (1599; f. 22). Francis Meres, in *Palladis Tamia* (1598) cited Scaliger amongst those "learned philosophers" who have asserted the value of poetry (f. 285). Yet there was also tension. Scaliger's morality of poetics is referred to by Thomas Lodge in his *Wits Miserie*, in which Lodge breaks off from a warning tale of bawdy cozenage, claiming himself "afraid that *Iulius Scaliger* should haue cause to checke mée of [for] teaching sinne" (1596; f. 39), implying either Lodge's sincere regard for Scaliger as an authority or, equally, that Scaliger was regarded by some as overly moralising. George Chapman attacked Scaliger as "soule-blind" for his "impalsied diminution of Homer" (sig. A3v), perhaps a self-serving characterisation given the statement's appearance in the introduction to Chapman's own translation of Homer's *Achilles Shield* (1598). It is notable, however, that these two responses, Lodge's satirical and equivocal, Chapman's hostile, both come from writers who produced plays for the London playhouses.¹¹ Thus Julius Caesar Scaliger, perceived as an authority on morality and poetics, and an enemy to dramatists, may have been read as inspiring a mischievous critique in *Leir*, which assigns to Skalliger

¹¹ Both writers are praised as dramatists in *Palladis Tamia* (f. 283v).

the precise role of “teaching sinne” to Leir and, especially, to Gonerill and Ragan, as well as placing him in a play that, in its freewheeling temporality and multiple geographic locations, firmly ignores the dramatic unities.

It is Scaliger’s son, Joseph Justus, however, who had the greater presence in English print by the Jacobean period, and who dedicated his career to perfecting a theory of universal chronology, the very system from which *Leir* dislocates itself. Joseph Justus Scaliger addressed the problem of “how to harmonise Biblical chronology with the chronologies of the other nations of antiquity” with his *De Emendatione Temporum* (Paris, 1583) (Burke 47). This work was “lavishly illustrated with tables,” and “reduced all chronologies to a new one, the Julian” (Burke 47). Anthony Grafton outlines the significance of Joseph Scaliger’s work: “[He] won renown for his reformation of the traditional approach to chronology,” by combining and coordinating data from classical and biblical sources in order to detect “gaps in the historical record [and] fill them by astonishing feats of historical detective work (“Renaissance” 77). His “achievement inspired widespread excitement” (78), although attempts to unite so many disparate histories to a single timeline meant that his pagan chronologies led to timelines and genealogies predating the creation of the world (Grafton, “Rise and Fall,” 172), which Scaliger defined as “proleptic time” (172). This caused acute historical dissonance; as Grafton asks, “In what sense, if any, did he consider these dynasties to be real? What sort of history could be said to have happened before the Creation?” (173). Similarly, readers of *Leir* might have asked what kind of eighth-century BCE British aristocrats might inhabit a Christendom of saints, palmers, and puritans.

References to Joseph Scaliger, frequently praiseful, abound in English print. For Lambert Daneau, in *A Treatise, Touching Antichrist* (1589), he is “a man verie

excellent in antiquities and other knowledge” (f. 65); and John Eliot’s French primer, *Ortho-epia Gallica* (1593), includes a translation of a poem by Bathas praising Scaliger as a polymath who

Not by one onely Idiome
his secrets to vnfold,
But as the learned Scaliger,
whom men the wonder hold
...
O rich and supple spirit that can
his tongue so quickly change,
Cameleon-like into what author
likes him best to range. (f. 17-18)

This poem was reproduced in a different translation in Robert Allott’s poetry anthology *Englands Parnassus* (1600), presenting Scaliger as an exemplary polymath, although its reference to Scaliger as “wits Chamelion” (f. 495) suggests a quality that, in the negative, might be read as describing *Leir*’s Skalliger, who adapts his demeanour and honesty according to his schemes. Perhaps most allusive to *Leir*’s treatment of Scaliger is a reference from the clown Clove in Jonson’s *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1600). Clove cites Scaliger as “the best Nauigator in his time” (sig. H4v), thus suggesting, punningly, a figure adept at temporal orientation. Futher, Clove’s anachronistic attribution of this opinion to Aristotle seems to mock those who would dislocate Scaliger into antiquity.

From the 1570s, Scaliger's work had led him to engage with "the most contentious of all areas in world history ... the problem of the origin of the modern English, Dutch, French, German, Italian, and Spanish peoples" (Grafton, *Scaliger* 2: 76). This project, to recover an authoritative, universal account of world history from the disparate, fragmentary, and conflicting accounts of religious and national histories and myths, required Scaliger to engage with, and make judgement upon, the historiographic accuracy of these accounts. In this context, Scaliger had been cited and praised by George Buchanan in his efforts to promote the "attractive but imaginary Scottish kings" (Grafton, *Scaliger* 2: 80) so central to Buchanan's radical constitution, declaring that "having undertaken to illustrate the affairs of Britain, I thought his judgment was not to be omitted" (trans. Sutton).¹² As Grafton remarks, "Scaliger thus made his first prominent, public appearance in chronology as the defender ... of the legendary pre-classical past," that of Scotland (*Scaliger* 2: 80-81); this historiography is that elided by *Basilikon Doron* in favour of the Brutan histories for the purpose of promoting British union.

In 1605, *Leir* might have provoked a sense of historical dissonance. This nominally Brutan play "flagrantly occurs in AD time" (de Grazia, "Albion," 139), explicitly a realm or era termed "Christendom". It also seems to emphasise this extraction by allowing a villainous manifestation of the era's most famous chronologer to interact with and manipulate its historical figures, setting in motion and driving the play's action. Like Selden's illustrations to *Poly-Olbion*, though more obliquely, Skalliger's presence in *Leir* might serve to erode the Brutan histories in the

¹² Camden, in *Britannia*, would critique Scaliger's interpretation of Scottish history in order to challenge Buchanan, claiming that assertions of ancient Scottish civilisation were "nonsense" (40, trans. Grafton; cited in *Scaliger II* 81).

very moment that these were being appropriated in the cause of British union, making chimeras of both. Indeed, Woolf cites Scaliger as “Selden's idol” (“Erudition,” 34). Thus, amongst *Leir*'s dislocated Christians lurks a villainous personification of the very historiographic forces that, from Buchanan to Selden, would dismantle Brutan time. If these apparent games with temporal semantics can be seen as having any effect upon the play itself, it is perhaps to pull the narrative away from its chronicle, and therefore its tragic future: in Brutan time, Lear has five years left to live and Cordelia dies a despairing suicide. Perhaps *Leir* subtly suggests that, in its new Christian temporality, the play's concluding happiness endures. If *Leir* enacts the dislocation of Brutan time, however, *No-body and Some-body* represents the Brutan histories' absorption into the semiotics of the play's subplot, which is characterised by the overwhelming repetition of the language of nothingness and non-being.

No-body and Some-body

In this section I argue that *No-body and Some-body*'s Brutan narrative becomes absorbed by its satirical subplot in ways that may have compromised its capacity to be received as “true chronicle history”. This anonymous play was published under the title *No-body, and Some-body, With the True Chronicle Historie of Elydure, Who Was Fortunately Three Seuerall Times Crowned King of England*. It was probably written and performed around 1603-5 (Wiggins 5: ref. 1460) and published in 1606 for John Trundle, “to be sold at his shop in Barbican, at the signe of No-body” (sig. A1r). The Brutan king Elidure, and the version of history he represents, are overpowered by the presence of the personification of “Nobody,” and his successful struggle against the villainous “Somebody”. I will contextualise *No-body and Some-body* within the early Jacobean moment by examining the ways in which both James VI and I's

conceptualisation of Britain as “one body,” and the Brutan histories, are undermined by association with *No-body and Some-body*’s negating and satirical dramaturgy. If Anston Bosman’s observation that Elidure’s story, which “took up two thirds of the original text,” is also “the lighter of the two plots” leans on a qualitative reading, it is certainly true that Elidure and his Brutans are subordinate to the subplot’s prominence in the playbook’s presentation, in the title page’s prioritising of Nobody over Elidure, and in the play’s repetitive language. This primacy is established before the playbook is opened, via the title-page’s striking woodcut illustration of an actor in costume as Nobody (see below). For the purchaser, the context of “nobody” was established at the bookstall, the confluence of subject and salesmanship materialised in the playbook’s availability at a shop bearing the “signe of No-body” (sig. A1r). This absorption, I suggest, compromises perceived Brutan historicity by aligning its “true chronicle history” narrative and characters with the subplot’s relentless satire and language of non-being.

In his 1603 proclamation, James VI and I directed his subjects to consider England and Scotland “presently united, and as one realme and kingdome, and the subjects of both the realms as one people, brethren and members of one body” (Larkin and Hughes 19). Later, in a speech given to Parliament in 1604 and published shortly after, James described himself as “the head wherein that great body is united” (Sommerville 135), claiming that, not only was he husband to the realm, and that refusal of union would make him a bigamist, but that “I being the Head, should have a monstrous and diuided bodie” (136). Indeed, “[o]ver and over again, the king’s propagandists churned out the line that England and Scotland were now ‘one body’. This is what their opponents denied” (Russell, *Trevelyan* 130). This repetition might usefully be contrasted with *No-body and Some-body*’s opposing and negative

terminology: the word “nobody” is used over 150 times, becoming an incantatory, contaminating feature of the play’s semiotic fabric that spills over into materialisation in the figure of Nobody. From its opening prologue the play toys with the impossibility of creation *ex nihilo*, a concept also at the heart of anti-Brutan arguments:

A subiect, of no subiect, we present, for No-body, is Nothing:

Who of nothing can something make?

It is a worke beyond the power of wit,

And yet inuention is ripe:

A morrall meaning you must then expect, grounded on lesser then a shadowes shadow:

Promising nothing wher there wants a toong;

And deeds as few, be done by No-bodie:

Yet something, out of nothing, we will shew. (sig. A2v)

The play promises to present Nobody in language that pre-empts *King Lear*’s annihilating “nothing can come of nothing” (sig. B2r). Thus, the 1606 playbook might be read as satirising the “embodied” rhetoric of pro-union propaganda. The relentless iteration of the word “body,” overwhelmingly embedded within the titular “Nobody,” also takes in Nobody’s villainous opposite, Somebody, creating a pairing that is as “monstrous and diuided” as James’s vision of a disunited Britain. Both names, the first by corrosive negation, the second through a diffusive generality, “Some” rather than “one,” reflect the irresolvable antagonism between the two characters that the play recounts: these two “bodies” will never be “one” or, after all, “great”.

Additionally, although the prologue refers to the play's subplot, it might equally be directed at Elidure and the Brutan histories from which he was taken as "something, out of nothing," shifting both into a negative space. Elidure was already in some ways insubstantial, a relative Brutan nobody, being one of the more obscure Brutan kings, receiving almost no references in early modern print outside the standard historiographic texts.

Elidure, as the title of *No-body and Some-body* indicates, was crowned king three times. The narrative is complex, yet usefully summarised in Stow's *Chronicles* (1580): the corrupt king Archigallo is dethroned by his subjects for having "deposed the noblemen, and exalted the vnnoble" and "extorted from men their goods to enriche his treasurie" (f. 29). Archigallo is replaced by his reluctant brother Elidure, "a vertuous & gentle Prince, who gouerned his people iustly" (f. 29). However, encountering the deposed Archigallo whilst hunting, Elidure forgives his brother, reconciles him with the nobility, and restores him to the throne. A chastened Archigallo rules wisely for ten years before dying; Elidure is restored to the throne but his younger brothers Vigenius and Peredurus rebel, usurp, and rule together until their deaths bring the virtuous Elidure the crown for the third time. *No-body and Some-body* squeezes this seesawing narrative into a play already boasting a prominent subplot. Anthony Archdeacon has argued that "the historical plot is constantly teetering on the edge of comedy," citing an episode where "Vigenius and Peridure literally wrestle for the crown" (para. 19). Either way, any serious effect the historical plot may have had is arguably overawed by the subplot's pre-eminence both to the fabric of the play itself and to its presentation in print. I suggest that an examination of the play's possible provenance shows that a comic reading of *No-body and Some-body* makes sense in the context of the play's emergence from a theatrical milieu of

satire directed towards James VI and I; a context in which Brutal historicity became collateral damage.

Whilst James promoted union, his accession prompted the need for formal divisions in terms of the royal court, and three new courts were created; these accommodated James, Anna, and their eldest son, thereby establishing “alternative centres of power in the Households of Queen Anne [sic] and Prince Henry” (Peck, “Introduction,” 14). This was reflected in the creation and development of separate cultural coteries and institutions reflecting each royal’s interests and tastes. These often conflicted, creating in microcosm the divided “monstrous body” that James had warned Britain could become. Such divisions within unity were reflected in the theatrical culture, as “all three resident theatre companies in London (Admiral’s, Chamberlain’s, and Worcester’s Men) were taken under royal patronage”: the Admiral’s were now Prince Henry’s Men, Worcester’s were the Queen’s Men, and the Chamberlain’s, famously, became the King’s Men (Forse 66). *No-body and Somebody*, as the title-page states, was “acted by the Queens Maiesties Seruants” (sig. A1r) and, whilst no theatrical venue is specified, the company’s 1604 license, “mentions the Curtain and the Boar’s Head” as its principal performance sites (Griffith 62). Clowning seems to have been central to the company’s status. The former Chamberlain’s man, Will Kemp, was initially the “undoubted leader of the company” (Griffith 71-2) before being replaced by the clown Thomas Greene, who became the “named leader” after Kemp “left, or died” in 1603 (Griffith 83). The presence of prominent clowns may be one reason for the playbook’s prioritising of its comic subplot, not only through the title but via the addition of woodcuts showing actors in the costumes of Nobody and Somebody; Nobody, with his breeches reaching to his

neck is thus represented as having no “body,” or physical torso – only a head and limbs, thus amputating the centre.

The figure of Nobody had previously appeared in Jonson’s 1603 entertainment for Queen Anna at Althorp, “attired in a paire of Breeches which were made to come vp to his neck, with his armes out at his pockets, and a Cap drowning his face” (sig. B2v), and Griffith argues that the company “attempted to cater to Anna of Denmark as well as those with whom she was associated” (108). Taking place as part of Anna and Prince Henry’s progress from Edinburgh to London, the entertainment “highlights the public importance of the Queen and Prince Henry’s arrival in the locality” and the wider importance of their progress in ““anchoring”” the new regime (Knowles, “Entertainment,” 395). In print, the Althorp entertainment was appended to Jonson’s 1604 edition of *The Magnificent Entertainment*, generating an earlier Jacobean text in which “Nobody” and Brutan themes subtly shared space, perhaps even creating a competitive print context in which “Nobody” might be associated with Queen Anna, and the Brutan histories with King James. This is suggestive in terms of *No-body and Some-body*’s possible connections to Queen Anna’s theatrical coterie (Wiggins 5: ref. 1460), which was also associated with staging satirical plays, often at James’s expense. As McManus explains, early in James’s reign “the city stages played political satires which attacked the new monarch’s cultural differences,” and the mannerisms of his Scottish nobles (“Nation” 194-5), as well as the king’s perceived propensity for doling out peerages and wealth to his favourites.

Whilst the “most significant of the anti-Scots theatrical satires, *Eastward Ho!* ... and John Day’s *The Isle of Gulls* (1606) were performed by the Children of the Queen’s Revels” (195), another company affiliated with Anna, I suggest that *No-body and Some-body* may also fit the satirical bill, if more equivocally. It was performed at

a time when Scots were suffering assaults in London (Russell, *Trevelyan* 14), to the point that they “kept away from the theatres and all parts of the town except Charing Cross” (Wormald, “1603,” 35). In *No-body and Some-body*, Nobody, new to London, or Troynovant as the play interchangeably calls the city, is attacked in the street, “which made me fly / To the Them side, desired a Waterman, / To row me thence away to Charing-crosse” (sig. F1v). As befits a play divided between “something” and “nothing,” any potential satire is indirect, and many of the characters’ virtues might as readily be applied to James and his Scots as the wickedness of others. In the play’s opening exchange, Elidure, yet to become king, speaks of royal primacy as an institution that “Brookes not taxation, kings greatest royalties / Are that their subjects must applaud their deedes, / As well as beare them” (sig. A3v). This might have pleased James, whose *True Lawe of Free Monarchies* consisted in substantial part of multiple ingenious variations of this sentiment, such as his insistence that the biblical king Nebuchadnezzar, a “Tyrant, and vsurper of ... liberties” (Sommerville 71) should not only command the loyalty of his conquered subjects, but that they should “pray for his prosperitie” (71). However, Elidure’s sentiment, and therefore James’s, is challenged by the monstrous behaviour of King Archigallo, who is deposed by his lords, the Duke of Cornwall complaining that Archigallo has “[t]he Clergie late despisd, the Nobles scornd, / The Commons trode on, and the Law contemnd” (sig. B2r).

This final point echoed current concerns, public and parliamentary, regarding James’s view that union could be brought about by royal power alone, specifically, and most symbolically, the new name “Great Britain” (Wormald, “1603,” 27). Significant in this regard is the title-page’s configuring of Elidure as a “King of England” (sig. A1r) rather than “Britain”; perhaps an example of the perception by

many of the English that these two terms were relatively interchangeable but, also, and particularly in 1606, perceivable as an elision or rejection of the term “Britain” and, by association, of James’s assertion of his monarchical right to enact union:

[T]o change the name ... as James wished, simply by royal authority, seemed to give him the authority of a conqueror, which in seventeenth-century political thought carried the most terrifying arbitrary overtones ... The fear that England could vanish in a puff of smoke. (Russell, *Trevelyan* 36)¹³

Identical fears of insubstantiality and erosion, of course, surrounded the Brutan histories. *No-body and Some-body*’s subplot requires “the audience (or reader) ... to admire a social hero [Nobody] who, rather uncomfortably for everyone, doesn’t really exist” (Archdeacon, para. 11). Nobody’s presence within the play’s “true chronicle history” plotline may have allowed this discomfort to spread to its Brutan kings.

No-body and Some-body’s subplot centres on the villainous Somebody’s attempts to destroy the virtuous Nobody’s reputation, providing opportunity for relentless satirical punning that allows many of society’s good works to be attributed to “nobody,” thereby suggesting that - in the world beyond the play - virtue is absent. Asked by his master why Nobody is admired, Somebody’s servant replies:

Come twentie poore men to his gate at once,

¹³ There is evidence that other playwrights considered the adoption of “Britain” over “England” a distasteful necessity. Hill notes that “after all the discomfort inherent in Munday’s construction of ‘Britishness’ in [*Trivmphes*] ... by 1614 he had defaulted to calling the nation ‘England’ once again” (*Pageantry* 331n.).

Nobody giues them mony, meate and drinke,
If they be naked, clothes, then come poore souldiers,
Sick, maymd, and shot, from any forraine warres,
Nobody takes them in, prouides them harbor,
Maintaines their ruind fortunes at his charge,
He giues to orphants, and for widdowes buildes
Almes-houses, Spittles, and large Hospitals,
And when it comes in question, who is apt
For such good deedes, tis answerd Nobody. (sig. B4r)

In response to this, Somebody's scheme redirects the pun in order both to slander Nobody and allows the play to suggest that no one takes responsibility for wicked deeds. He orders his servant to

Goe thou in secrete beeing a subtile knaue.
And sowe seditious slaunders through the Land,
Oppresse the poore, suppress the fatherlesse,
Deny the widdowes foode, the staru'd releefe,
...
And when the raisers of this dearth are sought
Though *Sombod*y doe this, protest and sweare
Twas *Nobody*. (sig. B4v)

The play's personification and opposition of being and non-being were echoed in Jacobean debate over the Brutus histories: Elidure, it was argued, was also "nobody,"

not a historical king but a product of Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century "books of nothing," a potential interpretative option augmented in the play by his generous and blameless character's similarity to Nobody. In a reading that satirises both sides of the debate, Somebody's persecution of Nobody might also be perceived in those historiographers attempting to disprove the Brutan histories: Somebody undermines and discredits the virtuous Nobody, a formulation that ironically valorises the assaulted party even as his non-existence is emphasised. By the play's conclusion, negation appears virulently contagious. Nobody is exonerated by Elidure and the slanderous Somebody is executed, thus becoming a species of "nobody" himself. In vanquishing Somebody, and in appearing alongside Elidure, Nobody corrodes everything with his negating presence. This contamination is, I think, encapsulated in the semantic oscillation of the following stage direction: "*A fight betwixt Somebody and Nobody, Nobody escapes*" (sig. D4r). On stage, the character Nobody makes a getaway. On the page, the sense is more troubling: in a conflict between truth and untruth, between opposing historiographies, history and satire, all positions become doubtful, a situation from which nobody escapes.

In the long term there would be definite outcomes to the debate over the Brutan histories and to James's union project. The short term, however, as John Ross and Anthony Munday observed, was characterised by doubt and conflict. Richard F. Hardin frames Ross's work as communicating "his sense of the entire period from the settlement by Brutus to the exile of Cadwallader as a continuously woven fabric" ("Geoffrey" 243). Echoing this text/textile metaphor, Escobedo describes the ways in which historiographers attempted to incorporate the Brutan histories into their visions of history: "[t]heir narratives resemble long tapestries that, even as they grow longer, produce their own rips and tears, forcing the weavers to go back and repair them"

(*Nationalism* 3-4). However, the anxiety underlying this work is identified by Ross, who admits that “nothing can be so complete, as they say, down to its very fingertips, which other men (and learned ones at that) cannot rip it to shreds” (trans. Sutton). The following section redirects the examination of negative terms in *No-body and Somebody* towards *King Lear*, arguing that, if the first quarto may be read as sensitive to the Brutus controversy, it might figuratively be imagined as one of the sites wherein the Brutus histories, at first unthreaded from chronology, now appear to be ripped to shreds.

King Lear

According to Blayney, few early modern printed playtexts contain as many “self-evident blunders” as the first quarto of *King Lear* printed by Nicholas Okes (*Texts* 184; cited in Clegg, “Lear,” 162). For editors, one of the least troubling of these “blunders” is Lear’s recognition of his own rising madness: “O how this mother swels vp toward my hart / *Historica passio* downe thou climbing sorrow” (sig. E4r). The error is found in Lear’s Latin, and his term “*Historica passio*” is almost universally emended in modern editions.¹⁴ As Kaara Peterson has noted, it has long been established that *King Lear* incorporates material taken from Samuel Harsnett’s *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603) (2), a text which references a malady termed “*Hysterica passio*,” or the “hysterically humor of the Mother” (f. 25),

¹⁴ This includes Rene Weis’s “parallel text edition,” which runs Q and F on opposing pages and presents the editorial approach as “conservative in the treatment of each text, emending only where it is absolutely necessary” (73). I suggest that silently amending “*Historica passio*,” as Weis’s edition does, cancels a rich compound reading that augments but does not compromise the reading “*hysterica passio*”.

implicated as a medical cause of apparent demonic possession.¹⁵ However, early modern editors allowed the original reading to stand until Q4 in 1685 (Halpern 215), suggesting that Q1's "*historica*" was, or could be, received as meaningful.¹⁶ As such, I suggest *Historica passio* be read as a coinage that, even if unfamiliar, could cause the reader to reflect upon its possible meanings within *King Lear*. In this way, the term might provoke reflection on the play's representations of "true chronicle history," inviting a reading of its "division of the kingdoms" (sig. B1r) as a terminal division between Brutus and lived history.

Richard Halpern, the only critic I have identified to accept and address the original reading, imagines *Historica passio* as "the bearing or enduring or manifestation of historical force through one's person and one's body," produced by the tensions of representation between dramatic character and the "historical actants –

¹⁵ Harsnett is amongst the many early Jacobean texts to reference Scaliger, claiming that "*Scaliger* recounts a whole lineage of men, that could *oculis fascinare*: bewitch with their eyes, though they did not touch" (f. 70), an eerie reference in the context of *King Lear*'s obsession with eyes, seeing, and blinding.

¹⁶ The texts of *King Lear* in Folio to 1685 exist in a state of clear, if controversial, interdependence. The model proposed by the editors of *The Division of the Kingdoms* (1983) that F1 represents "a deliberate revision or adaptation of the version printed in the Quarto" (Taylor, "Authorship," 351) is broadly accepted, and that F2-4 "lack independent authority" in that each derives from its predecessor whilst introducing "significant textual interventions" and "conjectural emendations" (King 120-21). However, F3's amendment to "Hystorica" (Halio 67), i.e. adjusting the spelling but retaining the likely meaning, perhaps strengthens the argument that the phrase was at one moment at least understood as deriving from the etymology of narrative and historiography. Sonia Massai's argument, that the publisher of F4, Henry Herringman, paid particular editorial attention to the editions he produced and may have "relied on the editorial services" of John Dryden and Nahum Tate (337-38; 181), is intriguing in light of the emendation of *Historica passio*. Regarding the Quartos, Stephen Urkowitz notes that Q1 was reprinted in 1619 and again in 1655, with minor textual differences (24).

collective or impersonal” those characters represent (217). Halpern is discussing forces of historical change relevant to his reading of the play as exploring “tension between feudal and proto-capitalist cultures” (216) but the physicality of his formulation is evocative and useful to my reading, in which *King Lear* is responsive to the controversy of Brutan historicity, and *Historica passio* becomes a term suggesting embodied historiographic crisis: a once-historical Brutan figure’s agonistic experience of the process by which he becomes a fictional non-being. First, I survey the conditions of *King Lear*’s probable composition and performance, or what Curtis Perry calls the “familiar litany of topical elements in *King Lear*,” focussing on the notion that “Lear’s division of the kingdom ... both inverts and resonates with King James’s projected reunification of Britain” (125). I position my reading of *King Lear* as taking place in the months following the 1608 publication of Q1, which also post-dated parliament’s final rejection of James’s union proposals, “perhaps the most humiliating rebuff suffered by a Stuart king from the House of Commons” before the 1640s (Russell, *Trevelyan* 62). As Perry implies, *King Lear* as a “union text” is well-served by scholars. However, few have examined the play as a putatively historical narrative, the possible meanings of its location in British antiquity, or the ways it might respond to the debate surrounding Brutan historicity. Reading closely between the presentation of the Brutan histories in *Trivmphes* and *King Lear*, Dutton notes that, in *Trivmphes*, “Brute rejoices in the power of poetry that has revived the characters of ancient legends, allowing them to witness the final resolution of the discord which their own actions had created” (142). *King Lear*, however, not only cancels the Brutan line through the childless deaths of Regan and Cornwall, but enacts

“violence” upon the Bruton histories “as a whole” (146); that is, to their structural and historiographic integrity.¹⁷ To read *King Lear* in 1608 was to encounter all aspects of this negative conjuration in the aftermath of failed union and, as I will argue, royal bereavement. Concluding this chapter, I will return to Dutton’s argument and adapt readings from David Scott Kastan, Margreta de Grazia, and Philip Schwyzer in order to explore *King Lear*’s language of negation as it might affect a reader’s perception of both Bruton historicity and British union.

In 1937, John Draper asked, rhetorically, “could any well-informed person of that time” have seen *King Lear* and not recognised parallels with James’s early reign and his project for British union (176)? Scholars have adopted this as a solid foundation for further enquiry.¹⁸ Readings broadly pivot upon the question of whether *King Lear* presents Lear as James’s disastrous antithesis, thereby supporting the union project, or as an admonitory analogue critiquing his perceived absolutism. Both are possible, and perhaps should be read in parallel: as Perry observes, “If Lear seems the inversion of James at one moment, he seems quite like him at another” (125). Associations are multiple and shifting, and Annabel Patterson highlights the play’s “flexible hermeneutics” (*Shakespeare* 107). For example, James’s claim to Parliament in 1604 that “I haue done all that I can for you, I doe nothing but that which I am bound to doe” (Sommerville 143) aligns with Cordelia’s austere dutifulness, “I loue your Maiestie according to my bond, nor more nor lesse” (sig. B2r) more than Lear’s

¹⁷ Regan and Cornwall were the parents of Cunedagus, the king succeeding Cordelia, and putative ancestor of James. Their deaths, more than those of Lear and Cordelia, damage the play’s usefulness as a potential pro-union text (Schwyzer, “Jacobean,” 40-41).

¹⁸ James Forse provides a recent summary of positions (64), citing Farley-Hills (1990); Patterson, *Shakespeare* (1989), 106–09; Foakes, “Introduction” (1997); and Schwyzer, “Jacobean” (2006).

excesses. But few doubt that *King Lear*'s vivid message regarding the dangers of dividing the kingdom "must have appealed to the Master of the Revels as he prepared the Christmas entertainments in 1606" (Clegg 172); particularly as this echoed so clearly the purpose of James's Brutus reference in *Basilikon Doron*. This is understood to be the performance alluded to in the title-page's claim that *King Lear* "was played before the Kings Maiestie at Whitehall vpon S. Stephans night in Christmas hollidayes" (sig. A4r). At that moment, "the Parliament over which James I stormed like Jove with his thunderbolts was in session," and "the Union of the Kingdoms and the naturalisation of the Scots were at the centre of parliamentary debate" (Marcus, *Puzzling* 150). This issue has been cited as a possible reason for the King's Men's decision to release their play for publication; that by 1607 "its appeal as a repertory piece was much diminished" by Parliament's defeat of James (Clegg 172). In March 1607, having debated the issue since his accession, James made a final appeal, attempting to soothe English anti-Scots sentiment by assuring MPs that Scotland would be the less powerful partner (Mondi). He "took endless pains to remind his English subjects that his long experience of rule in Scotland did not mean that he had nothing to learn in England" (Wormald, "1603," 38).¹⁹ Despite this conciliatory approach, James's vision of a "reunited" Britain proved no match for the resistance of both James's Scottish and English subjects who were, ironically, united in their opposition to union: "[p]olemists demanded Union in the name of Henry VII, Henry VIII, in the name of Aeneas, Christ and the pagan gods, but the Commons

¹⁹ Hirst notes the plausibility of "[t]he Commons' fears that unification under the name of Great Britain would wreak havoc with all laws that referred specifically to England," but concludes that "the debates made clear that much of the resistance was purely xenophobic" (104).

saw the projected Union simply as the policy of a Scotsman called James” (Axton, *Queen’s* 135). This “mumbo-jumbo” (Brown, “Monarchy,” 18) also included the Brutan story that anchored *King Lear* in “true chronicle history”. Even James betrays, or concedes, doubt; his 1607 speech makes reference to the historical precedence of English laws, “if many famous histories be to be believed” (Sommerville 171). Whether Scottish or Brutan, these were, for many, *not* to be believed.

Thus, whilst in conception and performance *King Lear* may have included amongst its authorising effects James’s project for union, as a 1608 playbook its many possible conditions of reading may have included that of an autopsy. This is perhaps intensified by an overlooked, if minor, association between *King Lear* in print and contemporary events. It is a further commonplace of *King Lear* criticism to note that James, like Lear, “had a son who was Duke of Albany and a son who was Duke of Cornwall” (Axton, *Queen’s* 136) as a further indicator of the play’s topicality. This fact, however, whilst illuminating, does not give the whole picture of its potential reception in print. Halpern reiterates this, stating that “James ... had three children at the time *Lear* was written” (219), which whilst true misleads by omission. As previously noted, in addition to Henry, Charles, and Elizabeth, James and Anna’s daughter Mary had been born in May 1605. Princess Mary, the first English royal birth since 1537 and the first “British” royal, died on 16 September 1607 (Weir 251). Two months later, on November 26th, *King Lear* was logged with the Stationer’s Register (*DEEP* ref. 517). It has been argued that the play may have been released for publication because, following the failure of union, continued performance may have proved an embarrassment to James (Clegg 178-9). A further possible motivation might have been the play’s savage depiction of filial death and parental grief, exacerbated still further by the birth and death of Anna and James’s daughter Sophia

in June 1607 (Carney, Appendix 1, 8). Lear's mental collapse as he cradles Cordelia's body, in which, in a single line, he oscillates between acceptance – "[s]hees dead as earth"– delusional hope, asking for a "looking glasse" (sig. L3v) to see if she still breathes, and overpowering despair, "why should a dog, a horse, a rat of life and thou no breath at all, O thou wilt come no more, neuer, neuer, neuer" (sig. L4r), may understandably have proved intolerable entertainment for the bereaved family.²⁰

In addition to engaging with the play's relevance to the Jacobean moment, critics of *King Lear* have also addressed its peculiar cosmology, which brutally inverts *Leir's* benign providence. Kastan, writing on structures of genre and configuring the play as a tragedy, formulates "the world of the play" as existing not in "the secure, providential universe of the medieval Christian," but in "a time that offers neither restoration nor regeneration but only defeat and destruction" (102). One of the few critics to engage with the play's pagan setting, de Grazia, states that whilst this "has been dismissed as a detail" with "no bearing on the play's contemporaneity with its Jacobean audience," *King Lear* in fact "divides its characters from its first audiences" in order to show that divine providence and salvation were impossible to experience or foresee in the epoch before Christ; hence the narrative's savagery and failure of moral resolution (139).²¹ Alternatively, Schwyzer argues that the play's temporal closed system derives from a rejection of "the nostalgic spirit of nationalism" ("Jacobean" 45), resulting in a narrative that is "thorough in its dismantling of the figurative technologies of the union campaign," cancelling the

²⁰ Although these lines are realigned into verse lines in edited editions of the play, they are set as prose in Q1.

²¹ Both Kastan and de Grazia's readings are directed towards *King Lear's* potential engagement with Christian cosmology. I will address the eschatological aspects of the Brutus histories in my final chapter on *Cymbeline*.

means “by which the past can reach forward and touch the present” (42). Walled off from history’s mechanisms, *King Lear* offers “neither restoration nor regeneration,” having dismantled not only the “figurative technologies” of union, but also of Brutan historicity. The division of the play’s characters from its audience might be conceived not as the vast but navigable temporal division between the living and their ancestors, as I proposed with *Gorboduc* and *Lochrine*, but the void between lived reality and fiction. In short, for some of its first readers *King Lear* may have appeared disturbingly aware of its collapsing historiographic macrostructure; that the great figures of its “true chronicle history” had, in fact, never existed. Thus, *King Lear* invites the strange question of how it might feel physically to suffer the kind of historiographic rejection the Brutan histories were undergoing, a series of linguistic quirks that, whilst detectable from the play’s first scene, cluster most densely around the moments of Lear’s succumbing to madness.

Attacking Cordelia, the woman who, in the Brutan histories, was to become his royal successor, Lear berates her “little seeming substance” (sig. B3v), claiming that “we have no such daughter” (sig. B4v), configuring her as flimsily transparent, then in some way nonexistent. His claim to have suffered “a most faint neglect of late” (sig. C4r) reads like the words of those resurrected Brutan founders of civic pageantry discussed in Chapter Two. To cross boundaries of theatrical era and genre for a moment – those of civic pageant and narrative drama – and place Lear within the wider tradition of public history, consider the famous speech below, wherein Lear rages against Goneril’s criticism of his riotous behaviour. In this context, it suggests a painful reversal of previous Brutan founders’ language of polytemporal resilience, identity, and embodiment:

Doth any here know mee? why this is not *Lear*, doth *Lear* walke thus? speake thus? where are his eyes, either his notion, weaknes, or his discernings are lethergie, sleeping, or wakeing; ha! sure tis not so, who is it that can tell me who I am? *Lears* shadow. (sig. D1v)

King Gurgunt, in the Norwich entry of 1578 has the temporal resilience “in presence to appeare. / Two thousand yeares welnye in silence lurking still” (sig. B3r), along with the confidence and transtemporal vision to relay his history and that of his descendents (see Chapter Two). Lear, in contrast, has only questions, and anxiously calls for his audience’s renewed remembrance of an identity that appears to be slipping from him. Similarly, Brute’s announcement in *Trivmphes* that “after so long slumbring in our toombes / Such multitudes of yeares, rich poesie ... does reuiue vs to fill vp these rooms” (sig. B3r) repeats Gurgunt’s formula of a vital awakening. Lear, experiencing *Historica passio*, cannot discern between “sleeping, or wakeing”. The historiographic force that had enabled Gurgunt’s “presence” and Brute’s revivification is inaccessible to Lear. He cannot define himself and, less than an embodied Brutan founder or inhabitant of “true chronicle history,” he has become a shadow or, to cite *No-body and Some-body*, a “shadowes shadow” (sig. A2v), a secondary effect of something that is itself without substance. It can be argued that the Fool’s “prophecy” in the Folio *King Lear* (TLN: 1736-49) looks beyond its own time in a manner similar to Brute or Gurgunt, the Fool foreseeing centuries ahead to Merlin’s own prophecy. Even if the prophecy was performed at this time, as a

playbook Q1 *King Lear* offers no such suggestion of transtemporal awareness in its characters.²²

Lear embodies what Ross characterises as the unhappy loss of Brutan history, as if the histories themselves could physically and emotionally experience their own erosion; as alternately raging, resourceful, and defensive as Harvey's disquisition on the lost generations of Brutan kings in *Philadelphus*. In that text, Harvey sputters out into objectless cognitive exhaustion: "[I]t was not thus, or so: perhaps, neither this, nor that, but some other way, I cannot tell howe" (sig. H3r). Similarly, Lear's once-terrifying threats collapse into an impotent stammer: "I will haue such reuenges on you both, / That all the world shall, I will doe such things, / What they are yet I know not, but they shalbe / The terrors of the earth, you thinke ile weepe" (sig. F2v-F3r). The Brutan voice, experiencing *Historica passio*, becomes incoherent.

Ross frames the Brutan histories' critics as thankless, warning that "[i]f they ungratefully reject it ... they unhappily lose it" (trans. Sutton); Lear complains that his daughters' ingratitude has "wrencht my frame of nature from the fixt place" (sig. D2r), a place perhaps analogous to the once-fixed tradition of English chronicle, or the larger apparatus of world chronology from which *Leir* is uprooted but to which Lear defiantly pledges to return: he will "resume the shape which thou dost think I have cast off forever" (sig. D2v), meaning that he will resume the role of king that he has abandoned, just as those seeking to prove or engage with Brutan history may have led themselves towards the logical conclusion of their nothingness. In his madness, Lear denies forgery in an explicit context of kingship "they cannot touch me for coyning. I am the king himself" (sig. I3v), seeming to express in the first person the

²² I will return briefly to some further implications of the Fool's prophecy in Chapter Four.

exoneration of past Brutan chroniclers essayed by figures such as Ross and Harvey. Similarly, Edmund's dying observation regarding his romancing of both Goneril and Regan may be read as a dark comment on James's hazardous adoption of this simile in pursuit of his goal: "I was contracted to them both. All three now marry in an instant" (sig. L3r). As Lear complains, "[t]hey told me I was every thing, tis a lye" (sig. I3v). Brute as rejected Brutan founder, and James, rejected British unifier, might have sympathised. When the potential for futurity is restored at the play's conclusion, this is achieved through the Brutan histories' replacement by a synthesis of romance and alternative historiography: characters drawn from a subplot lifted from *The Arcadia*, and a more securely historical Saxon dynasty. *King Lear*'s Gloucester subplot is adapted from "Sidney's story of the Paphlagonian King and his two sons in the *Arcadia*" (Dutton 147), and Dutton notes that Shakespeare's choice of the name of Gloucester's son Edgar gestures towards an Anglo-Saxon king with a claim to being "the first historical (as distinct from mythological) King of Britain," whose self-presentation had been "self-consciously imperial in emphasis – the monarch enthroned not only as a king but as a king of kings" (148). Further, Edgar was a renowned ruler, celebrated for restoring law, unifying his divided kingdom, and extracting homage from the English princes (Skura 142). Having disguised himself as Poor Tom, Edgar states that "Edgar I nothing am" (sig. E3r). Nothingness for Edgar, however, is only another aspect of his disguise. Non-existence for Brutan Lear, his daughters, their forebears and descendents, however, is irreversible, and the play – to borrow Schwyzer's term – becomes "confined within the moment of loss itself" ("Jacobean" 45). This loss might be read as etiological, and *King Lear* as a text sensitive to the process by which four centuries of historiographical tradition became "books of nothing," a terminal metamorphosis, meaning that not only Cordelia, but

everything around her would “come no more” (sig. L4r). At the play’s end, Albany, representative of James’s Scotland and the only Brutan to survive, exclaims that he too is “almost ready to dissolve” (sig. L2v); and at Lear’s death, Kent, as if speaking to those readers still shoring up their Brutan faith, counsels Edgar to “let [Lear] passe,” then marvels that “the wonder is, he hath endured so long” (sig. L4r). Exasperated sceptics, for whom Lear, as well as his forebears and descendents, were such manifest fictions, might have agreed.

I have argued that, in *Leir*, the presence of Skalliger eats away at the edges of Brutan historicity, and that, in *No-body and Some-body*, Elidure and his Brutans are absorbed by Nobody’s negating proximity and the play’s satirical function. In *King Lear*, Brutan historicity is read in the aftermath of James’s failed union project, his own *Historica passio*; that is, an existentially traumatic experience in which one’s place within, understanding of, and relationship to, history, undergoes a painful and irreversible transformation and loss. For some, the excision of Brutan figures from historical time was characterised by dissonance and erosive doubt. Such sensations, I have argued, might have been agitated by reading these playbooks of “true chronicle history”. I am not arguing that the period 1603-08 saw the final erosion of the Brutan histories, only that these years provide a useful focus for exploring historical dissonance. In fact the erstwhile *Mirour for Magistrates*, a source for so much Brutan drama, was republished in 1610, its first edition since 1587. The new title page described the work, in the precise terminology of a Jacobean Brutan playbook, as “a true chronicle historie of the vntimely falles of such vnfortunate princes and men of note, as haue happened since the first entrance of Brute into this iland” (sig. A1r). By adopting the term “true chronicle history,” and highlighting Brute as the inaugural figure of British history, the 1610 *Mirour* appears to respond to *Leir*, *No-body and*

Some-body, and *King Lear* as providing a useful model for re-marketing this Elizabethan material in a new era.²³ Further, as Hadfield observes of the verses on Richard III inserted by the edition's editor, Richard Niccols, the influence of Shakespeare's play is evident ("Niccols" 170-71). This provides further evidence of the influence of drama upon Niccols's edition. Niccols lived a financially precarious life and thus "responded to current events and the needs of his possible patrons" (Hadfield, "Niccols," 165). Thus, like Munday, he may offer clues regarding the historiographic positions taken by the textual communities these patrons inhabited. In his preface, Niccols stresses the historiographical aspects of his contribution in terms of narrative and chronological accuracy. Where the narratives were "in some places false and corrupted," he has made them "historically true," and "the tragedies wrongly inserted" have been "disposed in their proper places, according to just computations of time" (sig. A4v), an effort perhaps inspired by awareness of Julius Scaliger's pioneering work. Niccols further notes, however, that "the tragedies from the time of Brute to the conquest I haue left [alone], with dependencie upon that induction written by M. Higgins" (sig. A4v). That is, the Brutus episodes, those perhaps most sensitive to questions of falsity, corruption, and being "historically true," have escaped Niccols's historiographic scrutiny. The amendments to, for example, Queen Cordila's account of Lear's reign and her own suicide, include several adjustments to Higgins's original 1574 version, but these are all towards correcting and regularising the verse.²⁴

²³ The use of the term also seems responsive to *Cromwell*; the volume included a new poem on Cromwell's life by Michael Drayton.

²⁴ A typical example of Niccols's adjustments is the alterations to Cordila's comment in the 1574 edition, that Lear "[d]id for my sisters flattery me lesse fauoure beare" (f. 49r) to "who for I could not flatter did lesse fauor beare" (f. 61r). Lear's motivation is carefully retained, whilst the metre is regularised.

Niccols resists tampering with the chronology of the Brutian histories and draws attention to their etiological primacy in his edition's title-page. It is ironic that this edition, newly categorised as a "true chronicle history," draws its genre designation from a recent sequence of playbooks that not only owe their existence in part to the *Mirour* itself, but which erode and disturb the historiographic issues – historical truth, "computations of time" – that are, for Niccols, central to promoting his edition's renewed timeliness. The playbooks of "true chronicle history" provide the last evidence of a sustained output of Brutian drama in the early modern period, in terms of theatrical repertory and print. Drama of the 1620s and 1630s saw only sporadic engagement with Brutian themes. However, as the next chapter will argue, these texts are notable for their dramaturgical diversity and the ways in which they seem to reconfigure Brutian time as a mythic and even post-mythic phenomenon.

Chapter Four: The Diminution of Brutan Time (1610 – 1637)

Throughout this study, I have examined the early modern performance and publication of Brutan drama as experienced by those living through the cultural and historiographic process I have termed “etiological erosion”. This was the gradual discovery – characterised by resistance, acceptance, and a category of oscillation between the two defined as historical dissonance – that the medieval tradition of pre-Roman ancient British history was in fact based on a twelfth-century invention. As shown, these origins served important social, rhetorical, affective, and political functions, yet this “need for an origin implicitly [forced] the *Historia* into a threshold space between truth and fiction” (Escobedo, *Nationalism* 143), the liminal territory of poetically embellished history, thereby “bridging the gap between history as ascertained fact and the various imaginative evocations of a metahistorical past commonly identified with poetry” (Ferguson 120). James VI and I’s programme for Scottish and English union propagandised the Brutan histories’ model of a Britain defined by its originary status as a kingdom united by Trojan Brute at its moment of foundation, sometimes continuing to present Brutan tropes as fact but at others foregrounding their poetical, rather than historiographic value. However, this was merely a movement towards greater erosion, as the early Jacobean era saw new historiographic texts making greater efforts to dispense with the Brutan histories altogether. These efforts were characterised by greater recourse to the Roman sources that contradicted Brutan tradition. This final chapter argues that, for those persuaded of the Brutan histories’ erosion, aftertraces and consequences of that erosion might be perceived in a number of dramatic texts published and performed in the late Jacobean

and Caroline eras. Each of these texts, as outlined below, enacts this phenomenon from a variety of British topographical and social positions.

I first address a play, *Cymbeline* (c. 1610; pub. 1623), that occupies the liminal historiographic space shared by Brutus and Roman time and as such may have evoked not merely a sense of etiological erosion but the post-erosion state this chapter addresses. Here, belief gives way to a perception of the iconography of Brutus time diminishing, dispersing, and ultimately vanishing. This detailed study of dispersal within a single text is followed by three shorter case-studies offering snapshots of Brutus texts and performances from the 1630s. I argue that, collectively, these suggest different ways in which the dispersal and vanishing of Brutus historicity continued to be felt and processed beyond the London repertory, whether in the Oxford university play *Fuimus Troes* (c. 1611-33; pub. 1633), or with Brutus figures presented in new forms that estranged them from their historiographic origins and sustained possible – yet in the event unfulfilled – Brutus futures. This is shown in Aurelian Townshend's court masque *Albion's Triumph* (1632), in which the masque's key performer, Charles I, can be seen as symbolically absorbing the Brutus figure Albanacht into his own iconography and embodied presence, and John Milton's *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634; pub. 1637), in which Locrine's daughter Sabren re-emerges from the waters in which she drowned as a benign water nymph.

Cymbeline

Cymbeline serves as a useful case-study for examining reception in the context of Brutus finality, represented by both the negating effect that Roman accounts of ancient Britain had on the Brutus histories, and by the accompanying end of Brutus belief. I address *Cymbeline* in two ways. First, by exploring the play in performance c.

1610-11, we see how its Brutan iconography served King James's self-image and foreign policy, even as this iconography was complicated by contemporary performances of Thomas Heywood's sequence of *Age* plays. Secondly, through analysing *Cymbeline* in print (1623) we encounter Brutan time's transition from being perceived as history, via early modern myth, into a post-mythic space that eludes conventional definition but not, perhaps, description. Whilst noting that the play's well-attested semiotic complexity can be seen as a barrier to interpretation and a field into which Brutan iconography is absorbed, I also argue that attentiveness to two textual details in *Cymbeline* offers additional readings in terms of its Brutan resonance. These are a single instance in F1 of Guiderius's pseudonym "Polidore" being rendered as "Paladour" (TLN: 1647) and Imogen's reference to the "diminution of space" (TLN: 282-3). The first of these, I will suggest, unravels one of the play's key icons – that of a prophetic Jupiter astride an eagle. This associates Jupiter with the Brutan town of Paladour, said to have been the site of a prophecy delivered by an eagle. This event subsequently became a test-case for early modern concerns regarding both Brutan history and the possible demonic source of prophecy itself. In the second case, Imogen's speech imagining the departure of Posthumous from Britain (TLN: 281-91) is examined for the ways in which it ravel[s] into a single moment *Cymbeline*, Brute's earliest actions in the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, and that text's analogue, the *Aeneid*. In this way, *Cymbeline* erodes its own apparent prophetic force and diminishes the space between Brutan time and its fictive sources.

As shown above, a number of early- and mid-Jacobean historiographic texts, when addressing the problem of finding the most secure historiographic point at which to begin an account of British history, turned to Roman rather than English or British sources. Jean Feerick, in part, credits this to the many newly translated

editions of classical texts, such as Caesar's *Commentaries* and Tacitus's *Agricola* and *Germania* (35).¹ These writers, following Camden, dealt with the loss of the Brutian millennia by reconfiguring the "primitive" Britain that Caesar had written of encountering, inviting their readers to "admire the virtue of a simple people who stood up to the might of Rome" (Curran, "Royalty," 279). Feerick argues that the debate over national origins and character was widespread beyond historiographic circles, gesturing to the "series of plays about antiquity that were performed in roughly the same period as *Cymbeline*" (35), including John Fletcher's *Bonduca* (c. 1611-14; pub. 1647), and R.A.'s *The Valiant Welshman* (pub. 1615). As noted in my introduction, it is perhaps indicative of the intellectual drift away from the Brutian histories that all of these plays use alternative and competing historiographic sources and avoid reliance on Brutian history. Additionally, in *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605) Richard Verstegan argued that "the Saxons, not the Britons, are the racial and cultural source of modern England" and, further, for the Saxons' racial and moral superiority to Brute's etiologically murky Trojans (Escobedo, "Britannia," 75).

Whilst all interpretations of dramatic repertory depend upon the accident of historical survival, and there is no parallel to Henslowe's *Diary* for the Jacobean era other than the fragmentary records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels from 1623-41, the print record combined with Herbert's log of plays licensed for performance and court entertainments suggests that *Cymbeline* and *Fuimus Troes* were the final plays of the pre-Civil War era directly to engage with Brutian history. As will be shown, this is done with a tone of retrospection that reinforces a sense of

¹ David Bergeron also notes that "the decade leading up to *Cymbeline* was particularly rich in the translation of Roman writers" (33).

incipient Brutan pastness.² As such, they must be distinguished from those plays already examined, the source narratives of which take place securely within the boundaries of Brutan time. As Escobedo notes of *Cymbeline*, “British roots are entangled with Roman roots” (“Britannia” 66), creating a double-perspective that is simply not the case for, say, *Lochrine*. In his catalogue of plays addressing pre-conquest Britain, Gordon McMullan classifies *Cymbeline* as “Roman,” rather than “Brutus/Arthur/Legendary” (“Colonisation” 139-40); however, I will suggest that *Cymbeline* presents its British characters as emerging from, if not existing within, Brutan contexts. For example, *Cymbeline*’s evocation of kings from anterior Brutan time, such as Lud and Mulmutius Dunwallo (TLN: 2377, 2407, 3814; 1432-39), suggests that in *Cymbeline* the past, at least, is Brutan. *Fuimus Troes* opens with a discourse between the ghosts of the now-familiar Brutan hero Brennus, said to have conquered Rome, and his Roman rival Camillus (sig. A3r-A3v). Thus these plays might be thought of as Brutan-Roman hybrids, both in their historiographic strategies and confusions and in the way that many of their key characters manifest the tensions implicit in staging figures for whom two very different historiographic accounts exist.

John Speed’s *The Historie of Great Britaine* (1611) offers an exhaustive survey of attitudes towards Brutan historicity since the *Historia* before reiterating and ultimately endorsing the argument that was so damaging to the Brutan histories; that their ahistoricity “appeareth by the silence of the Romane writers therein, who name neither Brute nor his father in the genealogie of the Latine Kings” (f. 164). Speed,

² Herbert’s records are assembled from a variety of sources and presented in Bawcutt, N.W. *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623-73*. (1996).

therefore, characterised pre-Roman Britain as a time “of obscurity, through whose mists no Eagles eyes could pierce” (f. 170). This doubt was formalised by Speed’s decision to sever Brutan time from historicity altogether and “begin the succession of Great Britains Monarchs, at the entrance and person of Iulius Caesar” (f. 170), whose *Commentaries on the Gallic War* (c. 52BCE) provided the first externally verifiable account of ancient Britain, namely his conflicts with British forces led by the general Cassivellanus. The British, as described by Caesar, were not the Trojan-descended dignitaries of the Brutan histories but people who “clothe themselves in animal skins ... paint themselves with woad” (trans. Hammond 5.14). Samuel Daniel’s *The First Part of the Historie of England* (1612) only named Brute once, noting that “with what credit, the accoumpt of aboue a thousand years from Brute to Casseuellaunus, in a line of absolute Kings, can bee cleared, I do not see” (f. 7) and that “the first certaine notice we haue” was from Julius Caesar. The years surrounding the Roman invasions of Britain therefore mark the outer limits of the Brutan histories, and set the boundary between “history” and “myth,” or “legend”. These latter terms, as shown in the introduction, do not tell the whole story.

My previous chapters have tracked Brutan performance through what Harris terms the “transitional phase” in which “that which is historical becomes ... myth” (*Untimely* 11). However, John Clapham’s *The Historie of Great Britannie* (1602) demonstrates the point at which use of the term “myth” suppresses certain aspects of the Brutan histories’ journey and, certainly, their ultimate destination. Like Daniel and Speed, Clapham begins his account of British history with Julius Caesar’s invasions. He also includes a disavowal of Brutan history that is familiar in its apology to tradition and the reconfiguring of Brutan history as essentially fictive:

As for the stories of Brute, from his first arriuall heere, vntil the comming of the Romans, diuerse Writers holde it suspected, reputing it (for good causes) rather a Poeticall Fiction, then a true History ... Howbeit, seeing it hath beene for so long time generally receiued, I will not presume, (knowing the power of prescription in matters of lesse continuance) absolutely to contradict it: though for mine owne opinion I suppose it to be a matter of more antiquitie, then veritie. (sig. A4r)

Clapham speaks of Brute as an honourable – that is, nationally enobling – “Poeticall Fiction,” a term that, as we have seen, shows writers such as Clapham interrogating the questions raised by material we now call “myth”. Just as we might recognise qualitative differences between very old, and more recent and verifiable historiographic texts, so Clapham identifies a distinction between “antiquitie” and “veritie,” suggesting that the Brutian histories, belonging more to the former, are compromised in the latter category: verifiable truth. The passage echoes Camden’s equivocating rhetoric of 1586, but it also leans towards the more openly sceptical Speed and Daniel a decade later. This, however, is not the issue. In the 1606 edition of Clapham’s work, this preface was removed. Brutian history is not engaged with, acknowledged, or apologised for. It is amputated. This is where I suggest the terms “myth,” as defined by Barthes, and “poesie historical” find their limitations as they relate to etiological erosion.

If poesie historical might be equated with Barthes’s conception of myth, as something acted, spoken, and received, then the Brutian histories were becoming unspoken. As noted, this moves Brutian time into a post-mythic space that, whilst elusive to definition as a fixed state, might be described as a transformative process

analogous with early modern theories of matter and eternity. Helkiah Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia* (1615) was "the largest and fullest anatomical work produced in England up to its day" (O'Malley 11; qtd. in Birkin), yet it also accommodates much philosophical and spiritual material. Arguing that "perpetuitie and immutability" were the best proof of divinity, Crooke conjures a model of temporalities that might usefully be applied to *Cymbeline*. Whilst perpetuity is not inherent in "all the parts of time Past, Present, and to Come," it can be found in the present, which, as a sequence of endless points, creates "a kinde of eternity" similar to a "clew of yarne, such as the Poets faigned the Destinies to spin," and which may be extended endlessly (f. 198). Crooke argues that matter itself is therefore eternal, as proved by the world's inexhaustibility. It is also clear to any observer, however, that individual objects, people, and things are not permanent. Crooke thus perceives that whilst the object or "particular thing" may end, its material does not, but rather is eroded and transformed into something new:

The dissolution of created things is but a resolution of one thing into another; hence comes the perpetuity of all things though subiect to alteration, a perpetuity I say, not of the same particular thing distinguished by one and the same forme, but of the Elementary parts whereof it was compounded. (f. 198)

In *Cymbeline*, as it appears in the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio (F1), we can trace the dispersal or "dissolution," that follows the erosion of Brutus time as a "created thing". The "Elementary parts whereof it was compounded" escape into *Cymbeline*, both infusing the play's exegetical potentials with Brutus and "British" resonance and disappearing into the flux of the play's oversaturated semiotic field. Whilst Brutus

texts would continue to be republished and produced – *Fuimus Troes* in all likelihood attempted its own Brutan-Roman fusion several years later at Oxford – *Cymbeline* encapsulates figuratively a moment at which Brutan time’s mythic function within early modern society is eroded and dispersed into new forms.

King Cymbeline, like Caesar’s British antagonist Cassibelan, existed in both Brutan and Roman time; that is, as two distinct figures from interconnected yet competing historiographies. Unlike Cassibelan, whose military exploits against the Romans were recounted in some detail by Julius Caesar, and re-imagined in similar and oppositional detail by Geoffrey of Monmouth, very little information about Cymbeline or his Roman parallel, Cunobelinus, had been recorded or fictionalised. The information that was provided, however, would have been significant for early modern readers: “Kymbalyn ... was a good man and well gouerned the lande in moche ... sperite and pees all his lifes tyme and in his tyme was borne Ihus crist our sauour” (Caxton, sig. B6v). Hardyng’s fifteenth-century Chronicle records that Cymbeline was the king “In whose tyme was both peace and all concorde / Through all y^t worlde, and borne was christ oure lorde” (f. 38v). Stow is similarly brief, although revisions to subsequent editions of his work reveal the tensions between Roman and Brutan accounts. In the 1565 edition of his *Summarie*, Stow records that “Cymbalinus,” had ruled “[w]hen Cesar Augustus the second emperour by the wyll of God hadde stablyshed moste sure peace thorough the worlde,” and when “oure Redemer Iesu Christe, very God and man, vpon whom peace wayted, was borne” (sig. C4r). However, for *The Chronicles of England* (1580), Stow altered the British king’s name to the Roman equivalent, “Cvnobelinus” (sig. C2r). Holinshed, as Ros King notes, was characteristically both inclusive and disorientating regarding nomenclature, offering “Cymbeline, Cynobelinus and Kymbaline,” only to “rather [give] up on the

name for Cymbeline's eldest son" (72), referred to as "Guiderius or Gunderius (whether you will)" (qtd. in King 72). Clapham presented Cunobelin, crediting him with a civilising influence on the British who, without their Brutan inheritance, were reconfigured as the woad-wearing primitives of Caesar's *Commentaries*. According to Clapham, Cunobelin

began first to reclaime the Britans from their rude behavior: and to make his estate more respected, he afterwards caused his owne Image to be stamped on his Coine after the maner of the Romans ... During the time of his government, the divine mysterie of humane redemption was accomplished by the birth of our Saviour Christ. (f. 25).

For Clapham, despite the shift to Roman historiography, the reign of Cymbeline-Cunobelin remains defined by its synchronous relationship to the Incarnation, the event by which the redemption of humanity is accomplished and the pagan epoch concluded.

John Speed engages with both the historiographic tangles relating to Cymbeline-Cunobelin and his reign's inseparability from the Incarnation. Speed names "Cunobeline," and dismisses both his alternative name and Brutan descent as King Lud's grandson as deriving from "our British historians, by whom his name is corruptly written Kymbeline" (f. 174). In order to strengthen Cymbeline's civilised Roman credentials, Speed turns, ironically, to the *Historia*, reviving Geoffrey's original claim that Cymbeline-Cunobelin "liued at Rome, and in great fauour with Augustus Caesar the Emperor, by whom he was made Knight, and by his meanes the peace of Britain was continued without the paiment of their Tribute" (f. 174; Reeve

and Wright 80), a detail that *Cymbeline* repeats (TLN: 1449-50). For Speed, however, the central factor is the Incarnation, an event defined here in terms of peace foretold by prophecy that resonates with *Cymbeline*'s iconography:

In the foureteenth yeere of his raigne the Day-star of Iacob appeared, and ... the mighty God and Prince of Peace, the Emmanuel with vs was borne at Beth-lehem ... as the Prophets, Sibyls, and Poets from them haue affirmed. In Rome the temple of Ianus was shut, and in Britaine Cunobeline enioied peace with the rest of the world. (f. 174)

Cymbeline, then, is a figure who, uniquely amongst those Brutan rulers represented in early modern drama, comes with almost no narrative of his own but serves instead as a function allowing ancient Britain to participate in the state of world peace that early modern theology believed was brought about by the Emperor Augustus's consolidation of his empire, the *pax Romana*, or *Pax Augustus*, and which was a prerequisite for the Incarnation.³ The consequences for *Cymbeline* of this interweaving of Brutan, Roman, and biblical historiographies are complex. Whilst much critical energy has been exerted on attempting to sift, resolve, or prioritise the play's many discreet yet interacting contexts, the following analysis attempts to embrace the play's hermeneutic excesses as bearing meaning in their own right and as

³ Lila Geller explains that the "prosperity of Rome was essential to the effective spreading of Christianity by the apostles. Thus the *Pax Augustus* is part of God's preparation for the incarnation. The arguments that lead to Eusebius' acceptance of the necessity of the Roman Empire are commonly repeated in Renaissance histories" (243).

creating an unusually free textual space in which the vanishing of Brutus time can be explored.

Valerie Wayne, editor of the third Arden edition of *Cymbeline*, describes the play as “malleable and complex, yet difficult to make sense of in its collocation of times and cultures” (2), a characterisation representative of much *Cymbeline* criticism. D.E. Landry, approaching the play as an example of “dreams as history,” notes that critics have struggled “to interpret the play in any unified way” or to “assign it any structure” (68). This is perhaps a symptom of the play’s being set during a historical reign for which the chronicle sources offered no narrative. To fill this void, *Cymbeline* draws on disparate, seemingly unrelated, occasionally historical, and manifestly fictional sources, a concatenation characterised as “heterogeneous, being partly based on the written records of British chroniclers but also ... a number of popular myths and national legends, and folk-lore motifs” (Gibbons 22). The tale of a wager and a jealous husband taken from Boccaccio’s *Decameron* provides the central plot of the princess Imogen’s escape from attempted murder at the command of her exiled husband Posthumus, who has been gulled into believing that he has lost a wager regarding the inviolability of her chastity to the scheming Roman, Iachimo. A subplot, wherein the royal party of Cymbeline, his Queen, and her brutish son Cloten negotiate with Augustus’s Rome in a dispute over unpaid tribute provides a fictional prelude to a Roman invasion assigned in the chronicles to the reigns of Cymbeline’s sons, Arviragus and Guiderius.⁴ These sons are portrayed as unknowing kidnap victims raised since infancy in a British wilderness associated with Wales. The Incarnation

⁴ Emrys Jones notes that in Holinshed it is Guiderius who refuses to pay tribute to Augustus, not Cymbeline, and that Shakespeare transfers the events of Guiderius’s reign to that of his father (88).

goes unmentioned. The play concludes in a long scene containing multiple narrative resolutions, unmaskings, and revelations. Forgiveness and peace are finally asserted by Cymbeline's declaration that "Pardon's the word to all" (TLN: 3749). *Cymbeline's* generic indeterminacy, its relentless teetering between comic contrivance and painful affect, may be due to its debt to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* (c. 1609), a work that did much to establish the genre of Stuart tragicomedy (Wayne, *Cymbeline* 48). However, the central concern of *Cymbeline* criticism since the 1960s has been to investigate in what ways, in or around 1610, this play incorporating such disparate materials might reflect its moment and have worked upon its audiences.⁵

In 1961, Emrys Jones noted that "[f]ew of the critics who have written about *Cymbeline* seem to have thought about the impression it made on audiences when ... it was a new play" (87). This oversight has since been comprehensively addressed. Jones's core observation, that the play "centres on the character and foreign policy" of James VI and I (89) has, in essence, provided the pivot for much subsequent criticism. J. Clinton Crumley argues that "most audience members would not have recognized the name of this obscure pre-Conquest ruler," and that "[i]f the play were billed as simply *Cymbeline*, few would enter the playhouse expecting history" (299). This underestimates the potential reach of Brutus history into public discourse. It is probable, though, that King Cymbeline may have offered playgoers a puzzle in terms of what kind of drama to expect and thus presented a potentially broad range of interpretative possibilities. Robin Moffet argued in 1962 for the Incarnation as the "central fact" of Cymbeline's reign, and asked how this might be "reflected in the

⁵ The approximate date is most recently argued by Wayne (*Cymbeline* 30).

form and details of the play” (207).⁶ Jones acknowledges this, and its significance for Jacobean audiences, observing that the play’s focus on peace was not only relevant for the world at the time of the Incarnation, but “its attempted re-creation at the very time of the play’s performance,” with the peace-oriented James, or “*Jacobus Pacificus*” ruling (96). Frances Yates fuses these approaches, arguing that *Cymbeline* was drawing upon “the idea of Empire through which the Roman Empire was sanctified and Christianised because Christ chose to be born during the reign of Augustus Caesar” (42).⁷

The term “*Jacobus Pacificus*” is invoked in Bergeron’s study of *Cymbeline*’s Roman affiliations, connecting the notion of *Pax Augustus* to King James’s irenic foreign policy, as demonstrated by his personal motto “*Beati Pacifici*” (33).⁸ W.B. Patterson tells us that James saw a pan-European “resolution of differences between Protestants and Roman Catholics” as essential to the establishment of a “stable community of nations” (342). This schema can easily be mapped onto the play’s concluding peace between Rome and Britain, although the attainment of this peace is awarded through Cymbeline’s beneficence, his army having thwarted the Romans’ invasion. James’s association with Augustus as a peacemaker extended to wider notions of *translatio imperii*, the medieval and early modern construction of history

⁶ Geller argues that the play’s more “precise centre,” in terms of its theological associations, is to be found in “covenant-contract theology” (241), and Cynthia Marshall that the play’s theological motor should not be sought in the Nativity but is better suited to “the traditional tone of Advent” (13).

⁷ Willy Maley also reconfigured Moffet’s terminology towards reading *Cymbeline* as a proto-text of the Union debate and nascent British imperialism, “a nativity play,” that “deals not with the birth of Christ, but with the birth of Britain” (148).

⁸ The frontispiece to James’s *Workes* (1616) shows him “enthroned with a cloth embroidered with the words *Beati Pacifici*” (Wickham 94).

that saw divinely sanctioned empire moving gradually westward from Rome. English proponents of this theory naturally saw the emergent British Empire as the latest manifestation of this trend, and this seems supported by *Cymbeline*'s closing prophetic image of a "Romaine Eagle / From South to West, on wing soaring aloft," and foretelling the concluding peace between "Th' Imperiall Caesar" and "Radiant Cymbeline" (TLN: 3806-07), which Patricia Parker describes as a passing of Roman virtue from Rome to a Britain symbolised by the virtues of "Posthumus and Imogen and by the king's recovered heirs" (205).⁹ The eagle is a powerful and recurring image in *Cymbeline*. Imogen defends her marriage to the lower-born Posthumus by declaring "I chose an Eagle" (TLN: 169); the Roman Soothsayer dreams of "Ioues Bird, the Roman Eagle wing'd / From the spongy South, to this part of the West" (TLN: 267-75), and thus predicts Roman victory over Britain, an interpretation he must later re-spin (TLN: 3800-08). Famously, this association with Rome and Jupiter is materialised in *Cymbeline* by the god's spectacular descent riding an eagle and delivering the cryptic, irenic prophecy that is interpreted as having foretold the play's resolving peace (TLN: 3126-82). In this context, Jupiter has been described as a *deus ex machina* moulding the play's action into conformity with "Christian conceptions of salvation history" (Jordan 71).

⁹ As well as potentially reflecting James's interests, *Cymbeline* has also been argued to engage with the iconography of Jacobean court faction, in showing parallels with the entertainments devised for the 1610 investiture of Prince Henry as Prince of Wales (Yates, *passim*); specifically, Ben Jonson's *Prince Henry's Barriers* (1610), which features Merlin and a strong focus on the interests of the "militaristic" prince who, Wayne notes, had a "'passion for history,' especially British history, fed with chronicles ... and read with an eye to the nation's ancestral past extending back to Brute" (*Cymbeline* 35).

Cymbeline's presentation of the virtues associated with eagles, James, and *translatio imperii* has been characterised as occurring within a Romanised context. That is, that the British to whom the "Roman Eagle" is soaring are, as Escobedo terms it, "already Romanized, worshipping Jupiter and the other gods of their enemies" ("Britannia" 70). Paul Innes describes this association as "utterly ahistorical" (5), arguing that the play goes to "great lengths to Romanise *Cymbeline*'s Britain by means of Jovian terminology" (12), seeming to gesture more towards the Cunobelinus of Roman accounts than the Brutus *Cymbeline*. From the perspective of Brutus time, however, Jupiter was worshipped in Britain long before the foundation of Rome, arriving at Albion with Brutus and invoked by characters from Estrild in *Lochrine* who cries out for aid in her suicide: "Strengthen these hands O mightie Jupiter / That I may end my wofull miserie" (sig. K2v), to King Lear's invocations moments before invoking *Historica passio* (2.4.15). Jupiter then, from a certain perspective, was a Brutus god long before he became a Roman one.

For *Cymbeline*'s first audiences in 1610-11, however, Roman-Brutus Jupiter could have been perceived as emerging from a more ancient and far less civilised antiquity, as presented in Thomas Heywood's ambitious sequence of five plays on the classical gods and heroes, in which Jupiter features heavily. These were *The Golden Age*, *The Silver Age*, *The Brazen Age*, and the two parts of *The Iron Age*, which appear to have been written and performed between 1609-12 and are described succinctly by David Mann as an "episodic admixture of bloodshed, amours, and

alogolagnia” (185).¹⁰ The dignified pre-Christian deity of *Cymbeline* would then have been closely associated with a parallel stage Jupiter whose lustful and violent actions arguably complicate the symbolic exemplarity critics have perceived in *Cymbeline*’s Jupiter. The *Golden Age*, having presented a euhemerised version of the lives of Saturn and his son Jupiter, concludes with a spectacular event described on the play’s title-page as “the deifying of the Heathen Gods” (sig. A1r). This shows, as the play’s presenter Homer explains “how these (first borne mortall) Gods were made, / By vertue of diuine Poesie” (sig. K2r), thereby assigning to poets the apotheosis of a pagan deity under the terms of euhemerism and poesie historical.¹¹ At the play’s conclusion, Jupiter and his brothers Pluto and Neptune draw lots for rulership of heaven, earth, and hell. Jupiter draws heaven and is presented with “his Eagle, Crowne and Scepter, and his thunder-bolt,” after which he “ascends vpon the Eagle” (sig. K2v) in an almost precise mirror image of Jupiter’s appearance in *Cymbeline* “in Thunder and Lightning, sitting vppon an Eagle” after which he “throwes a Thunder-bolt” (TLN: 3126-27). This contemporary theatrical association with *Cymbeline*’s famous moment has been noted (Wayne, *Cymbeline* 46-48) but not, I think, fully explored. If Jupiter in *Cymbeline* can be read as symbolising “a dying god” presiding over the “coming of a new era” (Marshall, *Last Things* 25), that is, either or both the Christian epoch replacing the pagan, or a Jacobean *translatio imperii*, then this casts

¹⁰ The estimates for each play’s date of first performance are: *The Golden Age* (c. 1609-11; pub. 1611; DEEP ref. 567), *The Silver Age* (c. 1610-12; pub. 1613; DEEP ref. 606), *The Brazen Age* (c. 1610-11; pub. 1613; DEEP ref. 595), and the two parts of *The Iron Age* (c. 1612-13; pub. 1632; DEEP ref. 797, 799).

¹¹ Douglas Arrell notes that Heywood’s approach can be traced to Caxton’s *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy*, “the first book printed in English” in 1473-74, in which “Jupiter and the other gods are portrayed as human kings and queens”. It was reprinted in the Elizabethan era in 1596, then again in 1607.

The Golden Age and *Cymbeline* as bookends to the beginning and end of pagan time. A Brutan context is enhanced by the *Age* plays' incorporation of Brutan time into their construction of universal history. In 2 *The Iron Age*, Hector addresses Aeneas regarding his future:

Hence Aeneas post from Troy,
Reare that abroad the gods at home destroy.
.....
Citties more rich then this the Grecian spoyle,
In after times shall thy successors build,
Where Hectors name shall liue eternally.
One Romulus, another Bruite shall reare,
These shall nor Honours, nor iust Rectors want,
Lumbardies roome, great Britaines Troy-nouant. (sig. E2v)

Here, Rome and Troynovant are explicitly configured as sharing a single origin. In this way, between approximately 1609 and 1612, Heywood's *Age* plays may, for the London playgoer conversant with Brutan tradition, have contributed to a sprawling cross-repertory account of classical time that seemed to conclude with *Cymbeline* and Jupiter's descent.

Heywood's Jupiter, however, is childish, transgressive, and violent, jarringly different from the remote and patriarchal icon critics have discerned in *Cymbeline*. In *The Golden Age* Jupiter rapes Callisto and Danae and, in *The Silver Age*, deceptively seduces first Alcmena in the shape of her husband Amphytryon, then Semele, resulting in her annihilation after she is tricked by Juno into demanding that Jupiter appear

before her in his true, divine form. His marriage to his sister, Juno, is by contrast a comparatively genteel event. The tone of these extended episodes is – disturbingly for the twenty-first century reader – often comic and always bombastic. Jupiter takes on multiple disguises, including cross-dressing as one of the goddess Diana’s followers, and indulges in comic play with mistaken identities. *The Silver Age* was performed at court before Prince Henry and Queen Anna in January 1612 (Wiggins 6: ref. 1645). Wiggins speculates that on this occasion *The Golden Age* and *The Silver Age* may have been performed in repertory with *Cymbeline* (6: ref. 1637).¹² If this were the case, it may have led to the perception that Heywood’s Jupiter was connected to, or even synonymous with, Shakespeare’s. For this court audience, and for wider audiences aware of both *Cymbeline* and the *Age* plays running in the London repertory, this presented a strange continuity in which the reckless and amoral prince-turned-god of Heywood’s sequence appeared at the end of pagan time in *Cymbeline* as the iconographic cipher for King James’s foreign policy, herald of *translatio imperii*, and harbinger of a Brutan-inflected *pax Romana*. In its original performances, *Cymbeline*’s Jupiter-eagle, which critics have associated with dynamic assertions of English virtue, nascent imperialism, and the Incarnation, may have been more suggestive than has previously been accepted of pre-Brutan antiquity, and thus of that antiquity’s putative roots in an indecorous, even brutal, classical paganism. This congruence was repeated in 1623, when a play named *The Escapes of Jupiter*,

¹² Wiggins examines the possibility of “creative synergy” between Heywood and Shakespeare’s companies regarding these and other plays. Noting that the King’s and Queen’s companies appear to have been working together for the January 1612 court performance, Wiggins proposes that the programme included *Cymbeline*, thereby also accounting for the presence of Jupiter’s eagle in both plays, “without having to hypothesise that 1610-11 was a boom time in the London trade for scenic eagle manufacture” (6: ref. 1637, 134).

Heywood's conflation of the *Age* plays' Jupiter scenes into a standalone narrative, was being performed in London. The performance of Jupiter and his eagle was revived on the London stage just in time to provide renewed pagan context for purchasers of F1, and thus *Cymbeline*, by the end of the year.¹³

This performance context mirrors one of *Cymbeline*'s principal effects: the tension between its apparent presentation of a series of complex allegories and symbols to be decoded, and those same symbols' numerous and often mutually eroding interconnections. In one of the play's most tonally confounding moments, Imogen wakes from apparent death and mistakes the headless corpse of Cloten, her would-be husband and would-be-rapist, for that of her husband Posthumus. The tableau arises from Cloten having dressed himself in Posthumus's clothes in order to inflect his intended violence on Imogen with blunt irony. Heather James describes this moment as a "semiotic matrix which confuses differences among sources, characters, and historical moments and generates more meanings than it can authorise and contain" (156). Yet James also insists that the image "makes sense only in terms of the *translatio imperii*" (156).¹⁴ Here, the specifics of this reading are of less significance than the way in which James's interpretative tension demonstrates how

¹³ *The Escapes of Jupiter* survives in Heywood's autograph manuscript (BL MS Egerton 1994). The dating is attested to by Herbert, the Master of the Revels, who recorded the following license: "An olde Play called the Escapes of Jupiter taken from the Cockpitt upon the remove of some of the sharers & because they had payde their parts thogh itt hath byn acted in the Kings house I have allowed of itt this 26th Aug. 1623 — I^{li} — It was not complained of by the company of the Cockpitt and that moved mee likewise to allowe of it. I had not allowed of itt but that the Cockpitt gave way & that they have byn sharers therein some of them" (Bawcutt 143).

¹⁴ Lisa Hopkins also explores *Cymbeline* in relation to the *translatio imperii* ("*Cymbeline*").

the urge to codify *Cymbeline* collides with its overwhelming multiplicity and semiotic oversaturation.¹⁵

Russ McDonald identifies similar overabundance, compression, and complexity operating at a syntactical level in the plays regarded as Shakespeare's later works, which include *Cymbeline*:

Lengthy, convoluted verse sentences may be strung together, or may be interspersed with brief ones, or may be broken up with exclamations, short and long, that may not be sentences at all ... any generalisation must be modified immediately with a list of exceptions, but these are often so prominent and widespread as to demand a contradictory generalisation. (135)

The same might be said of attempts to fix, or interpret, *Cymbeline*. McDonald further notes of Shakespeare's late plays that they appear to contain "patterns and fractals" at every level (29). This creates a "synecdochic style, a set of codes" that repeat and act upon meanings perceptible at the level of language, character, and plot (37), complicating the separation of linguistic or thematic effects between characters and events. To characterise the play's effects thus is not, I think, anachronistic. It has been observed that "[l]iterate Jacobean took great pleasure in teasing anagrams and etymologies out of personal names," that such games would have been particularly

¹⁵ Jodi Mikalachki ingeniously turns this oversaturation to support a historicising argument: "The unreadability of this tableau of headless masterlessness emphasizes the confusion of [early modern] British national identity" (318); whilst the dissonance between the drive to classify and interpret, which the play seems explicitly to invite, and semiotic oversaturation, is also noted by Maurice Hunt, who observes that "[o]ne must be careful not to turn these associations into rigid equations" (409).

appealing when applied to royalty, and that *Cymbeline* provokes this response (Pitcher 2). However, the play's elusiveness in the face of interpretation is suggested by marginalia found in a copy of F1, wherein a seventeenth-century reader notes above *Cymbeline*'s closing scene of multiple revelations and unmaskings, "Infinit questions of the circumstance of strange chances".¹⁶ This response may relate to the play's credulity-stretching resolutions, but also evokes the dizzying polytemporal and metatextual contexts activated by the competing genres of its plots and iconography and embodied in its characters' many names and aliases. Tracey Miller-Tomlinson describes these as "time-travelling names" (231) that allow the world of the play to snake out into Virgilian, Brutan, Roman, Jacobean, and Christian-eschatological temporalities. Two of these names – Imogen, and the name under which the kidnapped Guiderius is raised, Polidore or "Paladour" (TLN: 1647) – will serve as case-studies. But first one major and two minor examples demonstrate *Cymbeline*'s self-refracting complexity and the potential effects this may have on perceptions of the historicity of its sources and events.

Cloten takes his name from a Brutan Duke of Cornwall who fought in the civil wars triggered by Ferrex and Porrex's rivalry, and who also features as a character in *Gorboduc*. This Cloten was also the father of Mulmutius Dunwallo, who united Britain and is invoked by *Cymbeline*, in defiance of the Romans, as the king who

¹⁶ Meisei First Folio; Image 906. This copy of F1 is kept at Meisei University. The annotations are accessible as both transcriptions and facsimiles via a dedicated website. The annotator was named William Johnstone (Smith, *Making* 129). Emma Smith suggests that the marginal note cited above shows that Johnstone seems "rather to give up in bewilderment at the complicated revelations" (135). Johnstone is precise elsewhere, referring to "England" rather than the text's "Britain" when annotating *Cymbeline*'s discussion of Julius Caesar, noting the "Inuincible power of england within it selfe" and "englands lawes and liberties" (Meisei First Folio; Image 888).

“Ordain’d our laws, / ... whose repair and franchise / Shall, by the power we hold, be our good deed, / Though Rome be therefore angry” (TLN: 1432-39). Feerick suggests that by adopting this name, the play reverses Brutan history: Cloten’s rise through a war triggered by two brothers is mirrored when *Cymbeline*’s Cloten is defeated and killed after encountering Guiderius, the more warlike of two harmonious royal brothers (55). The ancient Cornish associations run deep and could, for an inveterate early modern playgoer or reader, trigger thoughts of many other plays covered in this study: Corineus, the founder of Cornwall and its first duke, featured as the giant effigy of *The Triumphs of Re-united Britainia* and civic processions at least as far back as the fifteenth century; the Dukes of Cornwall portrayed in *Leir*, *No-body and Somebody*, or *King Lear*’s eye-gouger. Particularly, perhaps, Cloten and his mother might appear as degraded descendents of *Locrine*’s Corineus, the formidable, club-wielding founder of Cornwall, and his daughter, the avenging Guendolene, the first Queen of Britain during the minority of her son, Madan, who due to his debaucheries died, like Cloten, violently in the wilderness.¹⁷ Ros King notes a possible contemporary allusion in that the “title of Duke of Cornwall ... is the one commonly given to the eldest son of a King of England to raise him to the peerage” (81), awkwardly aligning Imogen’s loathed suitor with Henry, Prince of Wales. This is a circuitous semiotic journey from multiple Brutan forbears via a play character to King James’s heir for any early modern playgoer looking for topical royal associations in *Cymbeline*. Gibbons has observed of the play’s historiographic hall of mirrors that “*Cymbeline* contains far

¹⁷ Guiderius declares his intent to throw Cloten’s head “into the Creeke / Behinde our Rocke” (TLN: 2440-41). Madan was “deuoured of wild beastes, as he was abroad in hunting” (Holinshed, 1587; f. 17). These associations would arguably have been made yet more available when *Locrine* and *Cymbeline* were published together in the Third Folio of 1664.

more material than a straightforward compliment to royalty requires, and this produces a multivalency” (29), the effect of which is a semiotic oversaturation that compromises the integrity of the play’s apparently meaningful iconography.

Even minor references trigger disruptive associations. Belarius, the disguised exile, seems to derive his name from Bellaria, a character in Robert Greene’s *Pandosto* (1588), Shakespeare’s source for *The Winter’s Tale*. Bellaria is also the name of a character in John Fletcher’s *Philaster* (c. 1609), a play argued to have influenced *Cymbeline* on a verbal and narrative level (King 7; Gossett, *Philaster* 4-7). This associative auto-generation persists at a closer textual level. Confiding his true identity, Belarius names the princes’ deceased nurse, whom they believed to have been their mother, as one Euriphile (TLN: 1664). In *The Pilgrimage of Princes* (1573), Lodowick Lloyd’s survey of Greek and Roman sources for useful *exempla*, a Euriphile is included under examples of “covertousness”. She was, Lloyd tells us, “so coueteous that she betrayed her owne housebande *Amphiraus*, to *Adrastus* kyng of the *Argiues*, for a bracelet of golde, that the kyng did weare aboute his arme” (f. 194). *Cymbeline*’s Euriphile is also a thief, having aided Belarius in stealing the princes from their father and whom he married for her assistance (TLN: 36522). Yet the associations spin further. In order to prove falsely that he has seduced Imogen, Iachimo steals her bracelet, presenting it to Posthumus in order to defeat him in the wager, an inversion of Euriphile’s intentions in stealing for Adrastus that defies interpretation (TLN: 940-44). Even passing names, then, cause *Cymbeline*’s network of associations to multiply into fractals, provoking and inverting allusion and meaning. It is into this vortex of multiplying, uncategorisable, and mutually distorting semiotics that *Cymbeline* enmeshes its Brutal iconography. The following section removes *Cymbeline* from the immediate political and cultural context of its first

performances and examines the play in print, just over a decade later, when it appeared as the concluding statement of F1. In this context, *Cymbeline*'s openness to semiotic oversaturation is intensified, in part by F1's preceding material, creating an ancient Britain "where anything could happen" (Schwyzer, *Literature* 17), and which eludes containment by genre, historiography, or codification, allowing "all possibilities free play" (Miller-Tomlinson 225). The infinite questions and strange chances of *Cymbeline* are the portal through which the Brutus histories can be explored in the final phase of their transition from historiographic tradition, through myth, into a category of text that is material yet obsolete, extant yet silent: books of nothing.

Cymbeline was one of eighteen previously unpublished plays appearing in the 1623 folio *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*. More specifically, it was positioned as the final play in the sequence of tragedies, and thus the final play in the volume. *Cymbeline*'s peculiar position amongst F1's tragedies (which, given its multiple happy conclusions, has long puzzled critics) may be of less significance than its position in relation to F1 as a whole; that it is, or could be perceived as fulfilling the role of, a "last" play and, as such, one in which the multifarious themes, genres, character types, and temporalities of the preceding thirty-five plays could be reflected and, in ways that are not easy to quantify or categorise, both resolved and dissolved. Amongst its many swirling contexts, the sequencing of plays invites the reader to reflect upon the outer boundaries of Brutus time as the setting for the end of, amongst other things, F1 itself. I suggest that this sense of multiple endings, of retrospection and resolution, creates a readerly encounter with F1 *Cymbeline* in which the play's already acute preoccupation with finality is heightened and extended even further. The Brutus histories provide the frame for F1 *Cymbeline*'s

sense of finality and yet, paradoxically, they can also be seen to vanish within the very context they establish.

If the playbooks of “true chronicle history” examined in the previous chapter were ephemeral texts in a print market of competing plays and other books in a similar price range, F1 stood largely alone in a field “usually reserved for works of conspicuous seriousness: Bibles and works of theology, law, topography, heraldry, genealogy and history” (Smith, *Making* 66). Although Ben Jonson’s *Workes* of 1616 had included his plays alongside his poetry and other work, F1 was “the first English book which consisted entirely of a large collection of scripts commercially performed outdoors” (Taylor 64).¹⁸ In terms of textual communities, “the price of the folio would have restricted some readers from even setting their eyes” on the book (Lyons 14), although this commercial shift into a more elite market does not necessarily indicate homogeneity of readership. The book’s early buyers “were not always men, or Protestant, or resident in London or even in England” (Mayer 103), but included “clergymen across the religious spectrum” (106), and the middle classes (107). The Folio’s price was determined in part by its size, weight, and the considerable logistics of acquiring the rights to the plays’ manuscripts and composing these for print, alongside the substantial cost of paper, a commercial risk meaning that, regardless of its content, “the physical format of the book itself [asserted] its cultural legitimacy” (Taylor 64), perhaps inviting attention to textual detail and scholarly allusion at a time when the historiographic legitimacy of Brutian history was in decline. The purchaser

¹⁸ Blayney also notes that the Jonson folio would have cost “considerably less” than F1, perhaps configuring the latter text as being of greater cultural, in addition to literal, value (“Introduction” xxviii).

of F1 would have seen in its catalogue list of plays a sequence of dramatic texts copious and inclusive enough to shuffle figures of Scottish, English, and Roman history randomly amongst its variously sourced fictions, whilst gesturing towards a sense of sequential logic and cohesion via its generic categories and the diachronic arrangement of the histories. The conclusion of this sequence, like any last thing implying a summation of what has come before it, was “*Cymbeline King of Britaine*”. The running titles named the play “*The Tragedie of Cymbeline*,” and this classification has caused much critical consternation. Crumley complains that F1 “misclassifies *Cymbeline* with vigor” (297), arguing that either of the volume’s two alternative categories would be more suitable. Wayne acknowledges that F1’s categorising structure might have created “expectations that were at risk of being disappointed” (*Cymbeline* 20) for readers anticipating a tragic conclusion to the play, and therefore to F1’s shaping of Shakespeare’s plays as a whole. Readers familiar with the play in performance would have remembered what to expect, and may even have found humour in the designation, and *King Lear*’s transformation from a quarto “true chronicle history” to a folio tragedy serves as a reminder of early modern theatrical genre’s taxonomic fluidity. However, in a study of *Cymbeline* as F1’s final play, Wayne also argues that the play “was a good candidate to conclude the book” specifically because it “includes multiple modes and genres” (“First” 404), citing Jonathan Bate’s observation that its “stylistic experimentation almost serves as an ironic epilogue to the Folio’s tripartite division”.¹⁹ Taken together, these readings of *Cymbeline*’s placement may have both a resolving and dissolving effect upon readers’ perceptions of the preceding material. Its generic and allusive capaciousness appears

¹⁹ “Introduction” to *The Tragedy of Cymbeline*, in *Complete Works*, 2240 (qtd. in Wayne, “First,” 404).

to offer an oblique summary and resolution of what has come before.²⁰ On the other hand, Bate's characterisation of the play as an "ironic epilogue" creates in F1 an object that, in its final pages, both re-collects and dissolves the foregoing material into a narrative steeped in Brutus, Roman, and eschatological themes and imagery.

Approaching the plays in F1 as a sequence rather than as individual works may alter readers' reception of these in terms of temporality, as well as genre and theme. For example, Emma Smith observes of the histories that, whilst in quarto each play may stand alone as a self-contained narrative, in F1 each play's ending "seems provisional ... the end of a chapter rather than anything more conclusive" as a turn of the page reactivates the violent, relentless sequence of English civil wars (*Making* 28-29). However, whilst few have argued for an intended structure to either the sequence of comedies or tragedies, Smith argues that for those reading the plays in order "there might be some shaping of their response to later plays in the light of reading earlier ones" (29).²¹ I suggest that Smith's focus on the physical practice of reading has important implications when considering the effects of *Cymbeline*'s apparent absorption and synthesis of so much that precedes it.

In *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, a work cited by Smith in her discussions of F1 ("Reading" 166), Wolfgang Iser examines what he calls the reader's "wandering viewpoint," a cognitive quirk meaning that the whole of a text "can never be perceived at any one time" and that to read requires both "retention"

²⁰ Wayne notes that "taken together ... critics associate *Cymbeline* with twenty-two other plays that Shakespeare wrote or cowrote along with his two narrative poems" ("First Folio" 406).

²¹ G.P.V. Akrigg argued in 1956 that the "tragedies were arranged according to what Condell and Heminge took to be the order of their composition," but is required to acknowledge a number of exceptions to this pattern (443).

and “protention,” encountering individual sentences or syntactic units that require the reader to both look ahead and retain that which has been read and is already passing out of immediate perception (110-112). If Iser’s model of the perception of a text, and the text as a physical object, might apply to discrete but compiled texts, then *Cymbeline* invites “retention” on a vast scale, the weight of F1’s preceding plays pressing on the final “chapter” in the sequence, and a foreshortening of the capacity for “protention”: the book itself is running out of time, there is less to foresee and this is felt in the reader’s physical sense of the object exhausting its pages – another way in which *Cymbeline* provokes a sense of looking back, of endings and resolutions. Russ McDonald notes that the play’s “festival of discoveries and recognitions is as long and complex as it is so as to afford the audience a release commensurate with the foregoing confusion and frustration” (179); we may add to this the cumulative effects of the discoveries, recognitions, confusions, and frustrations of F1 as a whole. To choose a single example, although one significant to Brutus, Roman, and sacred histories, we can examine the interplay between *Cymbeline* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, a play that also made its first appearance in print in F1, where it directly precedes *Cymbeline*. The two plays were also literally interleaved at the point of material composition, sharing pages of quire zz (Wayne, *Cymbeline* 383).

Antony and Cleopatra recounts events of world history immediately preceding *Cymbeline*’s historical frame. Octavius, mocked by Antony as a “young Roman Boy” and “Nouice” (TLN: 2807; 2770), will become the Emperor Augustus, the offstage power in whose name the Roman army invades and who was said to have provided *Cymbeline* with wardship in Rome as a child. *Antony and Cleopatra* also subtly foresees the Incarnation, *Cymbeline*’s other great offstage presence: “Shakespeare’s audiences ... were acutely conscious that the tragedy they were witnessing was being

played out immediately before the time of Christ” (Wortham 21), as pre-echoed in Caesar’s declaration that “The time of universal peace is near” (TLN: 2581). Whilst moving the narrative focus to ancient Britain, *Cymbeline* reiterates and intensifies these themes. F1’s concluding, if oblique, allusion to the Incarnation, may then be mapped not only via *Cymbeline* but by the preceding play’s language and historiographic continuity.

This association is embedded in an ekphrastic account of Imogen’s bedchamber, where Iachimo describes a number of objects carrying imagery both contemporary to and predating *Cymbeline*’s temporalities. One of these is a tapestry depicting Cleopatra (TLN: 1226-32), who, as Olson (57n) has noted, may have triggered in audiences memories of *Antony and Cleopatra* in performance. More immediately, for the reader of F1, this reference would have drawn into *Cymbeline*’s temporal field a character encountered only a few pages before, and whose suicide may be evoked in Imogen’s despairing contemplation of “selfe slaughter” (TLN: 1750). Imogen is also connected with Antony in terms of iconography. Both are described as “the Arabian Bird” (*Antony* TLN 1551; *Cymbeline* 612), a phrase only used twice in the Folio and relating to the phoenix, the mythical self-resurrecting bird, suggesting perhaps the “universal peace” of the Incarnation but perhaps also the end of Roman, pagan rule and, historiographically, of Brutus time. *Antony and Cleopatra* pre-empts these themes and foreshadow *Cymbeline*’s dispersing effects in a speech given by Antony, as he contemplates defeat and death:

Sometime we see a clowd that's Dragonish,
A vapour sometime, like a Beare, or Lyon,
A toward Cittadell, a pendant Rocke,

A forked Mountaine, or blew Promontorie
With Trees vpon't, that nodde vnto the world,
And mocke our eyes with Ayre.
Thou hast seene these Signes,
They are blacke Vespers Pageants.

...

That which is now a Horse, euen with a thoght the
Racke dislimes, and makes it indistinct
As water is in water. (TLN: 2826-37)

Only a few pages before *Cymbeline*, Antony here invokes a vision of insubstantiality figured though the shapes that appear in clouds and vapours, of dragons, bears, and lions, rocks, mountains, and trees that appear substantial but merely “mocke our eyes with Ayre” in order to describe his own dissolution. Even Antony himself “cannot hold this visible shape” (TLN: 2841). This insubstantiality reaches into F1 in both directions, triggering retention and recalling the “revels” that vanish into “thin air” (TLN: 1819-21) in *The Tempest*, F1’s opening play (c. 1611; pub. 1623), yet looking ahead to *Cymbeline*, where “that which is now,” Helkiah Crooke’s eternal present, becomes “indistinct as water is in water”.

The speech, coincidentally, evokes several of *Cymbeline*’s key images. When the Queen invokes Cassibelan as a symbol of defiance against the Romans, she describes the British mainland as “Neptunes Parke, ribb'd, and pal'd in / With Oakes vnskaleable” (1398-99), whilst Belarius describes the cave in which he has dwelled with the princes as “this Rocke, and these Demesnes,” which “haue bene my World” (TLN: 1629), a sense of locus reinforced by both Guiderius and Belarius’s description

of their home as “our rock” (TLN: 2441; 2455) within the Welsh mountains, and Cloten’s description of them as “mountaineers” (TLN: 2378). The imagery of rocks, trees, and elevated spaces, refined to Antony’s “pendant rock,” and “[p]romontorie / With Trees vpon’t” is even perhaps carried through to the play’s, and F1’s, conclusion, enmeshed in the reunifying exchange between Imogen and Posthumus:

Imo.

Thinke that you are vpon a Rocke, and now

Throw me againe

Post.

Hang there like fruite, my soule,

Till the Tree dye. (TLN: 3555-56)

Imagined by Imogen as upon a rock, or promontory, Posthumus responds by imagining himself as a tree laden with fruit, becoming also one of Antony’s “[t]rees ... that nodde vnto the world,” reassembling several of Antony’s images in order to construct, ironically, a picture of reunion and happy resolution. Further, this tree also invokes the “mighty Cedar,” of the prophecy delivered by Jupiter to Posthumus and finally revealed by the soothsayer as signifying Cymbeline (TLN: 3178; 3784). Posthumus’s surname, Leonatus, might seem an echo of Antony’s vaporous lion. Antony’s speech, then, in its placement preceding *Cymbeline*, appears to pre-empt these key images, and to present them as vapours, water dissolved in water, that “mock our eyes with Ayre”. Were it to have preceded a different play, of course, different associations would have been discernible. However, even as *Cymbeline*

invites a strong sense of finality and resolution, a sense foregrounded in F1 by *Antony and Cleopatra*'s evaporations, it further complicates this by looking out beyond its own ending through its emphasis on the significance of prophecy.

Imogen appears in *Cymbeline*'s closing scene disguised as a page, Fidele. The lost princes, Guiderius and Arviragus, recognise her as the boy they befriended and whom they believed to be dead (TLN: 3392-96). They cry out but Belarius quietens them: "Peace, peace, see further" (TLN: 3397). His meaning is that they should observe what transpires. Yet this passing phrase gestures towards both the play's irenic destination – its final word is "peace" (TLN: 3818) – and also, in Belarius's instruction to "see further," invokes the play's preoccupation with temporal perspectives. The breakdown of historicity not only dissolves the Brutus histories but, once dispersed from the constraints of diachronic time, paradoxically affords them a greater temporal scope. In *Cymbeline*, this seeing further is enacted through prophecy, both through the dreams of the Roman Soothsayer and as delivered in textual form to Posthumus by Jupiter. These operate as the final node of a sequence running throughout F1 that establishes a sense of prophetic momentum that may have been experienced as reaching an apotheosis, or at least an ending, in *Cymbeline*. Kastan, discussing the Shakespearean "romances" in general, describes this as directing the reader "beyond the tragic, demanding that we see beyond time's annihilating effects, beyond suffering and loss to forgiveness and reconciliation" (128). This is certainly the register of *Cymbeline*'s final scenes. A sense of prophetic accumulation would have been perceptible to readers with little or no passing knowledge of the intricacies of Brutus history but also, for those with specialised knowledge, additional associations may have revealed destabilising fissures undermining the play's core

iconography. *Cymbeline* is saturated with, yet semiotically fatal to, Brutan iconography.

Soothsayers, oracles, supernatural farsightedness, and characters who can see beyond their time appear throughout F1 and perhaps serve to create a sense of blurring at each of the book's generic borders. The sequences of comedies, histories, and tragedies each conclude with a play ending or hinging on prophecy. In *The Winter's Tale*, which concludes the comedies, the Oracle of Delphos is consulted in order to ascertain Hermione's fidelity to Leontes, then ignored (TLN: 800-05; 1321-22); the histories end with *Henry VIII*, and Cranmer's prophecy over the infant Elizabeth (TLN: 3384-3434), giving the plays' medieval sequence access to the Jacobean present, so that the concept of prophecy is "both legitimised and problematised by its incorporation into a history play," allowing the audience a position of evaluative retrospection (McMullan, *Henry VIII* 438-39). The next play, *Troilus and Cressida*, features the prophetic Trojan Cassandra, a putative Brutan forbear, who warns the fatally unconvinced Trojans of their imminent defeat with "Propheticke teares" (TLN: 1090). In the tragedies, a Soothsayer warns Caesar of the Ides of March, foretelling his murder (*Julius Caesar* TLN: 107); the "weyward sisters" draw Macbeth into regicide with equivocal prophecies (TLN: 130-169) but conclude with their vision of a line of kings reaching from the murdered Banquo to James himself (TLN: 1657-58). *King Lear*'s Fool, in a passage not present in the 1608 Quarto, offers his topsy-turvy prophecy-of-a-prophecy that, centuries later, "Merlin shall make, for I live before his time" (TLN: 1735-49). With this comment the Fool breaks open *King Lear*'s temporality, both anchoring it in Brutan historicity – the centuries before Merlin – and expanding its reach into prophetic time, aligning it with

Cymbeline in ways unavailable to readers of Q1 *King Lear*.²² *Antony and Cleopatra*'s Soothsayer warns Antony against competing with Octavius Caesar (TLN: 983-88). Many of these, the Oracle in *The Winter's Tale*, Cassandra, and the Soothsayers of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, are ignored, with tragic results for those to whom they have offered their farsightedness. *Cymbeline*'s prophecies, as noted, have been framed as endorsing James VI & I's irenic foreign policy and the notion of a Rome-to-Britain *translatio imperii*. By 1623, this may have made for uncomfortable reading.

Following the British victory over the Romans and a riddling prophecy delivered to Posthumus by Jupiter, the Soothsayer retrospectively adjusts the interpretation of his dream into a forecast of peaceful reconciliation between Britain and Rome:

For the Romaine Eagle
 From South to West, on wing soaring aloft
 Lessen'd her selfe, and in the Beames o' th' Sun
 So vanish'd; which fore-shew'd our Princely Eagle
 Th' Imperiall Caesar, should againe vnite
 His Fauour, with the Radiant Cymbeline,
 Which shines heere in the West. (TLN: 3802-08)

²² Brinkley notes that Merlin's prophecies, excerpted from Geoffrey's *Historia*, were popular throughout the medieval and early modern periods, to the point of being prohibited by the Council of Trent: two editions were published by Alanus de Insulis in 1603 and 1608, whilst *The Whole Prophecies of Scotland, England, France, and Denmark. Prophecied by Marvellous Merling* was published in 1603 and 1615 (8).

This passage, *Cymbeline*'s penultimate speech, might have been read as an endorsement of James's foreign policy in the moment of its composition and performance c. 1610, embodying the wider notion of *translatio imperii* in the entwined images of Jupiter and his eagle, "Ioues bird":

Plausible in light of figurations of James's own imperial monarchy in contemporary Stuart iconography, the identification of a triumphant British eagle flying west anticipates the conflation of empires, Roman and British, that is imagined in the play's concluding vision of history. (Jordan 102)

I have argued that this glorious vision may have been compromised for some when *Cymbeline* was first performed through associations with the apparently entertaining, if less than dignified, representation of Jupiter in Heywood's *Age* sequence. Similarly, the uses and perceptions of *Cymbeline*'s prophetic exegesis might have been different for the text encountered thirteen years later in F1. Gary Taylor, exploring F1's lack of a dedication to King James, suggests that, as "originally planned, the Shakespeare folio would have been associated, very clearly, with the pacifist hispanophile and ecumenical policies" of King James, as embodied in his decades-long project to secure a marriage between his son Charles and the Spanish Infanta, and to which Taylor attributes the decision to end F1 with *Cymbeline*'s celebration of British-brokered continental peace (68). However, in 1623 Charles undertook a swashbuckling yet disastrous adventure, in disguise, to surprise the Infanta in Madrid. His return, unmarried, in October 1623 "represented the complete collapse of James's foreign policy" (68), with Charles now actively opposing both peacemaking and the marriage (Patterson, *James VI* 554), a turn of events that may for readers have

instilled *Cymbeline* with an ironic sense of prophetic lateness, the eagle – agent of present and future peace – dead on arrival. By 1624, Charles “was pressing for war against Spain” (Capp 104). This sense would have been reinforced by the play’s Soothsayer appearing last in F1’s sequence of neglected prophets, James joining the parade of F1’s rulers to have been disappointed or defeated by equivocal or ignored oracular guidance. On top of this, the use of an eagle as one of *Cymbeline*’s central motifs of prophecy and imperial futurity may have subtly opened F1’s concluding British peace to a set of associations that were rooted in, and erosive of, Brutan iconography.

Following *Cymbeline* as king of Britain in the Brutan histories was Guiderius, his eldest son. It was Guiderius’s wars with the Romans that Shakespeare appropriated for *Cymbeline*’s Roman invasion (Floyd-Wilson 101). As described by Belarius, Guiderius is both naturally warlike and instilled with a vivid imagination, acting out the stories he hears. When hearing Belarius’s war tales, his “spirits flye out / Into my Story ... / The Princely blood flowes in his Cheeke, he sweats, / Straines his yong Nerues, and puts himselfe in posture / That acts my words” (TLN: 1651-56). It is Guiderius who encounters and summarily beheads the rampaging Cloten and this, combined with their cave-dwelling, “primitive” lifestyle, has led critics to associate Guiderius and his brother with the alternative model of ancient Britain suggested by the Roman histories, and to which writers such as John Speed had turned. The associations are, as everywhere, as multiply allusive as the pseudonyms Belarius gives the two princes in order to obscure their identities, “Polydore” and “Cadwal”. Howard Felperin observed that these names were suggestive of the *Historia*’s final king, Cadwallader, and Polydore Vergil, the “historian who chronicled those shadowy kings, however sceptically” (193-94). However, as Curran observes, these names

“suggest not the sixteenth-century political relevance” of Brutan history, “but rather the means by which the Galfridian tradition was exploded” (“Royalty” 287). Miller-Tomlinson sees in this an instance of the play’s metatextual self-awareness, that “[i]n an attack on the illusion of objective distance assumed in conventional historiography – an illusion perpetuated in Polydore Vergil’s attack on Geoffrey – Polydore is reduced to a character in the history he writes” (231).²³ More broadly, Wayne suggests that “the complexity of these identities suggests that the play actively mixes affinities ... to convey the Britons’ multiple origins and subsequent history” (*Cymbeline* 80). Vergil, of course, was the author who triggered early modern Brutan scepticism, and Cadwallader, the final king in the *Historia*, might also be seen as alluding to the end of Brutan time.

There is, however, a further possible reading of Guiderius’s alias, one made available by the play’s appearance in print and, like *King Lear*’s “*Historica passio*,” subsequently submerged by editorial practice. Guiderius’s pseudonym is standardised in modern editions of *Cymbeline* to “Polydore”. However, in its first use in F1, spoken by Belarius, the name is spelled “Paladour” (TLN: 1648), before settling on “Palidore” (never “Polydore”). This one-off variant was retained up to and including the fourth folio (1685) and altered by Rowe to “Polydor” (Wayne, *Cymbeline* 249). The use of a single spelling-variant may seem an insubstantial basis for an alternative reading but its perceptibility is attested by *Cymbeline*’s Restoration adaptation *The Injur’d Princess* (perf. 1682; pub. 1682), for which Thomas d’Urfey changed the name of the character based on Guiderius to “Paladour” throughout the text, demonstrating

²³ This possible placement of a once-living writer within a text he would have resisted also echoes my own reading of “Skalliger” in *Leir* (see Chapter Three).

early modern readers' sensitivity to even minor variants in spelling and naming.²⁴ Examination of the name's usage in early modern print opens up Brutan associations that have striking implications for *Cymbeline*.

In the Brutan histories, Paladour was not a person but a place, and a site of historiographic and etymological instability. This instability was expressed in terms of prophecy, eagles, and prophesying eagles, imagery central to *Cymbeline*'s theme of futurity. According to the *Historia*, King Rud Huddibras, the grandfather of Lear, had founded "the town of Mons Paladur," subsequently known as Shaftesbury. Geoffrey states that "[w]hile the city-wall was being constructed there, an eagle spoke; and if I thought that its prophecies were true, I would not hesitate to set them down here with the rest" (Reeve and Wright 36). The phenomenon of a speaking eagle passes unquestioned, yet its pronouncements are dismissed. From its earliest appearance, then, "Paladour" is inseparable from aquiline prophetic untrustworthiness. Nonetheless, when, in the *Historia*'s closing episode the defeated Cadwallader (analogue to *Cymbeline*'s pseudonymous "Cadwal," or Arviragus) departs Britain, he is encouraged to do so in part by recourse to "books of prophecies, uttered by the eagle which prophesied at Shaftesbury, by the Sibyl and by Merlin" (280). This episode draws together in a single sentence the prophetic eagle of Mons Paladur and three of F1's Brutan figures, *Cymbeline*'s heirs Paladour-Guiderius and Cadwal-Arviragus, as well as the Fool's polytemporal prophecy of Merlin in *King Lear*.

²⁴ George Steevens noted this peculiarity, and suggested that "there are some who may ask whether it is not more likely that the printer should have blundered in the other places, than that he should have hit upon such an uncommon name as 'Paladour' in this first instance. *Paladour* was the ancient name for Shaftesbury" (III, iii, 95; qtd. in H.H. Furness, *Cymbeline*, 3).

Over the course of the Brutan histories' medieval transmission, however, the eagle of Mons Paladur undergoes an etymological transformation. Grafton's chronicle takes a euhemerising approach to this apparent myth and argues that, when speaking of an eagle, Geoffrey's chronicler antecedents were in fact describing a human prophet named Aquila – Latin for eagle – and that this became misunderstood in subsequent iterations with the results that “many report how an Egle should then speake” (f. 45). The eagle becomes a human prophet, a figure described in Holinshed as residing in “mount Paladour,” and named “Aquila a prophet of the British nation” (f. 19). Even Speed appears to have acknowledged Aquila's prophecies as foretelling James's reign (Brinkley 8-9). Drayton's *Englands Heroicall Epistles* (1593) notes that “Cair-Septon in mount Palador” was “now called Shaftsbury, at whose building it was sayd an Eagle prophecied (or rather one named Aquilla) ... of the recouery of the Ile by the Brittaines bringing backe with them the bones of Cadwallader from Rome” (sig. G2v). Thus, for readers of F1, “Paladour” might evoke the prophetic eagle that Geoffrey of Monmouth invented then claimed to doubt along with subsequent discussion of the euhemised Aquila's prophecies. This binds together two of *Cymbeline*'s key symbols, the Jupiter-eagle and, as *Cymbeline*'s heir and future king of Britain, Guiderius, arguably compromising their value as exemplary symbols of a glorious British futurity. Additionally, as well as associating Guiderius with a particularly unstable moment of Brutan history, the episode of the prophecying eagle also connects *Cymbeline* to early modern arguments for the “satanic” nature of prophecy itself.

The eagle-prophet of Paladour was the subject of a vicious attack on the very concept and practice of prophecy in David Powel's 1584 edition of Humphrey Lhoyd's English translation of the fourteenth-century *The Historie of Cambria, now*

called Wales. Here, prophecies are characterised as satanic “toies and fables” by which “the simple and ignorant haue bin in all ages deluded and brought to great errors and blindnes by the practise of sathan, with these fained reuelations, false propheties, and superstitious dreames of hypocrites and lewd persons” (sig. C3r). At the very best, according to Powel, those who endorse or believe prophecy are “simple and ignorant”. *The History of Cambria* attacks prophecy itself as not only foolish and vain but as a product of satanic influence as proven by historical evidence, “as is manifest in our histories” (sig. C3r). This attack appears in a book on the ancient history of Wales, the country Arviragus and Guiderius inhabit, arguably strengthening its potential to draw associations with and complicate *Cymbeline*.

Cymbeline anchors its temporal farsightedness in an apparently optimistic series of reunions and prophecies, central to which is the interconnected imagery of eagle, prophecy, and royal heirs. For readers familiar with Brutus origins and etymology, however, the Jupiter-eagle, the future king Paladour-Guiderius, and the play’s tone of prophetic optimism might be compromised by their association with Mons Paladur, a case-study in superstition, unreliable historiographic transmission, and the “dreams of lewd persons”. This disrupts readings of the possible meanings of play’s conclusion, whether in terms of Jacobean peacemaking or the new British era that Guiderius will inaugurate. John Speed had characterised pre-Roman Britain as a time “of obscurity, through whose mists no Egles eies could pierce” (f. 170). The implication of Paladour-Guiderius’s semiotic network is that the eagle may not be an eagle at all, and that, whether eagle or man, as a prophet it should not be trusted to pierce futurity’s mists. Those who do believe, according to Powel, are “simple and ignorant”. In totality, these Brutus associations suggest a far less edifying reading of *Cymbeline*’s iconography, one that runs concurrent with the erosion of Brutus time

itself. Similarly, if in a different register, Imogen's name, and its networks of iconography, suggests ways in which, even as it reaches into prophetic space, Brutus time expands backwards to its inception and collapses into itself.

Cradling the headless body of Cloten, whose corpse she believes to be Posthumus's, and thinking the servant Pisanio has contrived this killing with forged letters, Imogen cries out that "to write, and read, / be henceforth treacherous" (TLN: 268-39). The reading of prophecy to predict the future or contextualise past events, and the etymological mutability of historiographic thought, are indeed revealed as treacherous in *Cymbeline*. Imogen most acutely expresses and embodies the way in which *Cymbeline*'s semiotic oversaturation creates a kind of hermeneutic snowblindness, where previously distinct categories and temporalities flow together like water in water. Impatient to leave for Milford, Imogen declares her confusion in terms that collapse the distinctions between one place and another, between the present and the future, restating the temporal collapse hidden in Aquila's transformation: "I see before me (Man) nor heere, not heere; / Nor what ensues but haue a Fog in them / That I cannot looke through" (TLN: 1548-49). Either the present moment or the present place cannot be perceived; and the future is a fog. This habit of expressing difference between two distinct entities through a single word is a habit of Imogen's and one which contributes to a sense of difference collapsing into sameness simultaneous with an emphasis on the heightened consequences of those differences. She speaks of a journey's duration between "houre, and houre" (TLN: 1536), and later of weeping "twixt clock and clock" (TLN: 1713). This habit also inflects Imogen's response to Arviragus who, believing her a boy and not knowing himself to be her brother, describes her as a figurative brother: "So man and man should be, / But Clay and Clay, differs in dignitie, / Whose dust is both alike" (TLN: 2250-52). If

Imogen embodies this experience as Lear perhaps embodied *Historica passio* – “I am nothing” she announces, in a moment of despair, echoing that play’s nihilism, “or if not, / Nothing to be were better” (TLN: 2696-97) – she does so in terms that suggest her perception and personification of Brutus time’s temporal nodes and its underlying fictiveness.

This is performed in a conversation in which Imogen asks Pisanio how long he watched from shore as his master Posthumus sailed away into exile. She castigates Pisanio for not watching longer and claims that, had she been at the waterside, she would have watched until he seemed to disappear:

Imo.

Thou should'st haue made him
As little as a Crow, or lesse, ere left
To after-eye him.

Pisa.

Madam, so I did.

Imo.

I would haue broke mine eye-strings;
Crack'd them, but to looke vpon him, till the diminution
Of space, had pointed him sharpe as my Needle:
Nay, followed him, till he had melted from
The smalnesse of a Gnat, to ayre: and then
Haue turn'd mine eye, and wept. But good Pisanio,

When shall we heare from him. (TLN: 281-91)

Imogen describes the departing Posthumus as appearing to shrink as he drifts out of sight, until he is “as little as a crow”. Posthumus shifts from the appearance of a needle to the near-dimensionless gnat and finally into thin air, in a process Imogen names the “diminution / Of space,” a unique phrase in early modern print that might be read as describing the trick of perspective through which Posthumus appears to dissolve into air. Yet this phrase has paradoxical qualities. The space between Posthumus and the watcher on the shore is not in fact diminishing, it is expanding as the ship travels farther away. Additionally, the notion that the diminution of space is working upon Posthumus alone, shrinking him, is fragile. The phrase suggests a more encompassing process of spatial contraction; not localised but enveloping *Cymbeline*’s wider space. This meaning is invited by *The Art of Logic* (1599; repr. 1617), which defines diminution amongst types of motion, as “a decreasing or diminishing of quantitie in the whole, as a body that consumeth or pineth by disease or otherwise” (sig. H2r), allowing the diminution of space a sense of moving from the state of being something to being consumed by sickness to less than it was. The sickness, for *Cymbeline*, might be imagined as Lear’s *Historica passio*. The word also carries a temporal meaning and is used frequently in the early modern period, as it is now, to indicate a “space of time”. Thomas Wilson’s *Christian Dictionary* (1622) defines time as “[s]ome certain space, as houre, day, weeke, yeare, &c.” (f. 490).²⁵

²⁵ *The Christian Dictionary* was in preparation at William Jaggard’s print shop and was one of several books contributing a “space of time” to the delaying of F1’s completion (Rasmussen, “Printing,” 20).

The word “diminution” appears only once elsewhere in F1, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where Antony, failing in battle, is described as having a “diminution” in his brain that “restores his heart” but damages his reason (TLN: 2385-86), another example of the play’s subtle interleaving with *Cymbeline*. Otherwise, it is a word almost entirely absent from early modern print drama but appearing frequently in religious treatises and philosophical tracts in ways that often engage with perceptions of temporality.²⁶ In Luis de Granada’s *Spirituell and Heauenlie Exercises* (1598), Granada invokes Seneca to illustrate time’s mutability in terms that pre-empt the tensions Crooke identifies between permanence and dissolution: “All things passe away, sayth Seneca, and are in continuall diminution & augmentation ... Nothing remayneth steadie of all those thinges we see: behold they are changed, whilst I speake, and I also am changed” (f. 118); *The Golden Cabinet of True Treasure* (1612) also speaks of time, as “beeing eyther past or to come,” so that “this moment, this pointe of time, deserueth rather to bee called a little little nothing,” that, once lost, contributes to the “great diminution of our days” (sig. E8v). Brutus’s history, in Imogen’s quayside vision, is implicated in these conceptions of temporal mutability and vanishing. This can be compared with the multiple temporalities of Othello’s handkerchief, an heirloom described by Harris as “not a linear geometric sequence but a dynamic topology, in which supposedly secure points become mobile vectors in seismic shifts that superimpose past and present” (*Untimely* 186). In *Cymbeline*, the handkerchief not only folds in on itself but disappears altogether. This is the “Gloue,

²⁶ The dramatic usage appears in *Sir Gyles Goosecapp* (pub. 1606), in a passage that appears to satirise pious speech but which also indicates the universal effect of diminution that resonates in Imogen’s usage: “[T]he world, / Or that small point of it, where virtue liues / Will suffer Diminution” (sig. I2r).

or Hat, or Handkerchife” (TLN: 277) that Pisanio sees Posthumus waving from the deck of his departing ship, an object the indeterminacy of which increases even as it vanishes. The diminution of space enfolds the diminution of time, spoken of in a moment when Imogen and Posthumus, two figures identified with both the prehistory and foundation of Brutus time are imagined as drifting apart from one another, shrinking into space. This directly invokes the *Aeneid* and Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia* and collapses the space between the two.²⁷

Imogen, as has long been observed, almost shares her name with Innogen, the wife of Brutus and thus co-founder of the Brutus dynasty.²⁸ Posthumus, more complexly, has been associated with Brutus and Brutus’s putative grandfather, Aeneas, and is compared by Imogen to “false Aeneas” later in the play.²⁹ The image of a woman watching her lover depart by ship invokes the moment in the *Aeneid* at which Dido is abandoned by Aeneas and awakes to see his fleet sailing away, leaving “nothing left behynde at shore” (sig. L2r).³⁰ This creates an associative synecdoche in which a fictional moment situated at the very end of Brutus time - Posthumus’s

²⁷ The *Historia*’s deep dependence upon the *Aeneid* was fully staged by Nahum Tate, who decided to alter a play he had written on Dido and Aeneas to a play about Brutus (*Brutus of Alba*) simply by changing the character’s names (Adolph 119-120).

²⁸ The most recent summary of the debate regarding whether “Imogen” is Shakespeare’s intended deviation from the source or the result of a compositorial minim error can be found in Wayne, *Cymbeline* (391-98).

²⁹ Patricia Parker, in particular, has examined Posthumus’s Virgilian associations, noting that “Aeneas’s father is named Sicilius Leonatus, the same as Posthumus’s” (195). Heather James suggests that “Shakespeare formally identifies Posthumus with Vergil’s hero at the moment that Aeneas abandons Dido” (162-63); the connection between the *Aeneid* and Posthumus’s initial departure, however, has not to my knowledge been highlighted.

³⁰ This quotation is taken from Thomas Phaër’s translation of the *Aeneid*, first published in 1573 but reprinted many times into the seventeenth century.

departure for Rome during the reign of Cymbeline - is overlaid with an evocation of Brutus prehistory; that is, those events that enabled and predated the beginning of the *Historia*, both in terms of Geoffrey of Monmouth's vision of Brutus history's Trojan origins, and in the source text he turned to when creating that history, the *Aeneid*. The image has further parallels. Valerie Wayne compares Imogen's speech with a passage in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* wherein Alcyon watches Ceyx sail away from shore (161).

However, in a passage that appears to be absent from subsequent iterations of the Brutus histories, Geoffrey's *Historia* also provides a striking model for the quayside episode in *Cymbeline*. In the *Historia*, Innogen sails away from her homeland, Greece, having been awarded to Brutus following his defeat of her father Pandarus: "She lamented at leaving behind her parents and country, and kept her gaze fixed on the coastline until it faded from view" (18). Innogen's marriage, and her departure with Brutus, are the events necessary for the discovery of Britain and the establishment of the Brutus bloodline. Conversely, Imogen's marriage with Posthumus takes place at the opposite end of Brutus time, where the *Historia* becomes challenged by the Roman histories. The passage in the *Historia* situates Innogen as standing on deck, looking back to shore. The image in *Cymbeline*, in which Imogen imagines herself on the shore watching her husband depart, echoes this epochal moment. A reader familiar with the *Historia* might detect in this echo a diminution of the space between the poles of Brutus time, a reading strengthened by the later reference to Posthumus as the Brutus ancestor Aeneas.³¹ The quayside scene draws together the beginning of Brutus's journey to Britain and a parallel event from

³¹ Although the *Historia* was not translated into English, or even printed in England in its original Latin, until the eighteenth century, a 1587 Latin edition published by Jerome Commelin in Heidelberg became the standard edition in England (Escobedo, "Britannia," 63).

Cymbeline's reign in Roman Britain, at the close of Brutus time. In diminishing the space between these two moments, *Cymbeline* not only enacts one of Harris's "seismic shifts that superimpose past and present" (*Untimely* 186), but figuratively erodes the intervening centuries.

This imagery of temporal mirroring, compression, and disappearance is also visible in the "patterns and fractals" identified by McDonald throughout *Cymbeline*. In the play's opening scene, the First Gentleman, denying that he has overpraised Posthumus's virtues, claims only to "extend him ... within himselfe, / Crush him together, rather than unfold / His measure" (33-35). This complex image carries the sense that no praise is great enough to fall beyond Posthumus's capacity to contain and deserve it. Yet it also invokes diminution in the compressive action of crushing Posthumus, rather than unfolding him, even as he is praised. Belarius, speaking of his past, speaks of the "fore-end of my time" (TLN: 1632), a formulation that brings past and future together, diminishing the space between the two to such a degree that they almost replace one another, the end coming first. Preparing to walk a high mountain pass, Belarius notes that the princes may see him from below and "perceiue me like a Crow" (TLN: 1568); his perspectival language and imagery is identical to Imogen's when describing the disappearing Posthumus. Throughout the play, Imogen appears singularly susceptible to, or emblematic of, such temporal retraction and disturbance.³²

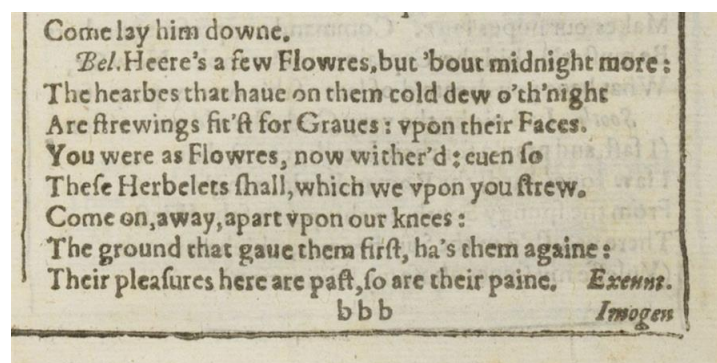
³² This inversion seems to support Miller-Tomlinson's recent study of *Cymbeline*'s temporalities, specifically in its use here of Ovid and the *Historia*. As Miller-Tomlinson argues, *Cymbeline* "rejects the *Aeneid*'s teleological narrative, in which history reaches a climax in the founding of empire and ascension of Augustus, in favour of a narrative of metamorphosis, mythopoesis, hybridity, and circularity" (237). Whilst teleology is certainly undermined, I suggest that in F1 the multiple finalities of *Cymbeline* are also emphasised.

Having escaped house-arrest in order, as she thinks, to reunite with Posthumus at Milford Haven, Imogen speaks of her absence from Cymbeline's court as "the gap / That we shall make in Time" (TLN: 1530-31) – a phrase evocative of temporal as well as spatial absence and emptiness. From the beginning of this study, a recurring theme in the survival of Brutus history has been the underlying fear of, and resistance to, the gap its absence would make in historical time, imagined by the writer Edmund Bolton as a "vast Blanck upon the Times of our Country" (sig. Cc2v-Cc3r).³³ Before awakening from apparent death, Imogen speaks in her sleep, bewildered in a dream that, despite having travelled "all night," Milford is "sixe mile yet" away (TLN: 2615-16). Carr describes this moment as a "nightmare in which [Imogen] can never walk far enough to reach Milford Haven" (325); that is, Imogen dreams herself as trapped in a kind of spatial and temporal bubble. This moment, too, offers insight into ways in which F1 as an object interacts with these themes. Prior to waking from her sleep, Imogen, having unknowingly swallowed a potion designed to create the appearance of death, is believed dead by the princes, who sing their eulogy then depart, leaving her body where it lies (TLN: 2611). This action brings the text to the end of the folio page. However, Imogen's sudden awakening from apparent death – the stage direction describes her as she might appear to an audience, rather than the character's

³³ Edmund Bolton's *Hypercritica* (c. 1618; pub. 1722); qtd in MacDougall 23.

true state: “Enter Aruiragus, with Imogen dead” (TLN: 2495) – is revealed to the reader by the presence of the ensuing speech prefix, “*Imogen*,” as the page’s catchword (fig. 3). This allows a skip in time ahead of the physical act of turning the page. The reader experiences, through an accident of typography, a small prophecy of Imogen’s figurative resurrection that sends a jolt through Iser’s temporal and material procedure of reading.

Imogen is elusive in other ways that have a bearing on her role as an emblem of Brutus origins. Her name, whilst invoking the mother of Locrine, Albanacht, and Camber, also offers a reading that seems to invoke a fictive root at the Brutus histories’ source. John Pitcher, reflecting on the uses of naming in *Cymbeline* argues that the n Fig. 3. The F1 catch-word “*Imogen*”. Folger copy 68, sig. bbb^r. “n,” “gives every indication of having been anglicised from the Italian noun for likeness’ or ‘image’,” citing John Florio’s 1611 definition of an “Imagine” as “‘an Image, a similitude in forme, a figure. Also a colour for any thing. Also an imagination, a thought or opinion of any thing. Also remembrance or apprehension of a thing ’” (8).³⁴



³⁴ The definition appears in Florio’s *Queen Anna’s New World of Words, or Dictionarie of the Italian and English Tongues* (234). Florio defines the Italian “paladore” as “a fanner, or winnower of corne” (350).

Thus a reader of F1 may have drawn associations between “Imogen,” and the punning inference suggested by Florio’s “Imagine”: an entity embodying imagination, memory, similitude, thought and opinion, all of which serve to erode and diminish Innogen as a historical figure by evoking in her name many of the charges levelled at Brutan historicity. Imagination in fact defines the conditions of Imogen’s “diminution of space” speech. Posthumus’s departure is not something Imogen has witnessed but an event that she works to imagine. As noted, the vision of Posthumus sailing away until he is “melted ... to ayre” (TLN: 288-89), draws centrifugally upon parallel episodes from the *Aeneid*, *Metamorphoses*, and the *Historia*. But the single moment into which they are compressed is never lived but only imagined by Imogen, whose name itself is a synonym for something imagined, and who might herself be said to be “melted ... to ayre” through these associations.³⁵ Imogen is specifically associated with the element of air. A remorseful Iachimo declares that having wronged Imogen, “The Princesse of this Country,” the “ayre on’t / Reuengingly enfeebls me” (TLN: 2900-01), as if the British air and Imogen are interconnected. This configures Imogen as a founder, or un-founder, at the end of Brutan time. She is aligned with the element of air, as *Locrine*’s Brutan founders give their names to landscape and rivers.³⁶

In a second attempt to interpret the prophecy left by Jupiter for Posthumus, the soothsayer Philarmonus parses the text’s reference to the “tender Ayre” which

³⁵ The overlaying of *Aeneid*, *Historia*, and Imogen’s own moment might have evoked the instability of the *Aeneid* itself. As Richard Verstegan complained, Virgil “had much fained and fabuled in his tales of *Eneas*,” and that “Queen *Dido* did never see *Eneas* in her life” (sig. M3v).

³⁶ In her journey to Milford, where her murder is intended, Imogen may even be seen as echoing the journey of Sabren, who dies in the river named Severn for her, inaugurating the waterway as a troubled English-Welsh threshold.

Posthumus must embrace as one of several conditions necessary for the restoration of peace to Britain. He does this by defining the tender air as representing Imogen in Latin as “*Mollis Aer*,” which the soothsayer translates via “*Mulier*” (woman) to “this most constant Wife” (TLN: 3765-82), that is, Imogen.³⁷ Yet Imogen is, in the sense explored here, constant only in being a constant reminder of *Cymbeline*’s diminutions: of the blank spaces between fiction and history, and the gaps in time dividing its multiple temporalities. Imogen is emblematic of both something airy and imagined, and of Brutan origins. She functions as a synecdoche for *Cymbeline*’s free temporal space, its games with time, fiction, and historiography, and in this way completes the cultural work of dispersing the eroded Brutan histories into the play’s, and F1’s, surrounding and competing semiotic fields. Having recovered from her time-warping dream of travelling to Milford Haven, Imogen reflects that although she knows it is not true, the dream continues to inhabit her emotions and senses: “[t]he Dreame’s here still: even when I wake it is / Without me, as within me: not imagin’d, felt” (TLN: 2628-29); this is a useful description of the disorientating experience of retaining bodily and affectively a habit of belief that has in all other respects been eroded and accepted as insubstantial. As such, it might serve as a fitting way to imagine the residual mixture of longing, confusion, nostalgia, and loss perhaps experienced by those early modern readers and playgoers who were finally accepting that the strange millennia of Britain’s pagan antiquity had always been, as Richard Harvey had

³⁷ Mary Floyd-Wilson relates “mollis aer,” and attendant tree imagery in the soothsayer’s prophetic reading to a passage in Camden’s *Remains* in which similar language is used to describe the Saxons’ settling in Britain, and suggests that the lost brothers represent the Saxons, thereby staging the “historiographical rediscovery of England’s Saxon origins” (113) for which Verstegan had argued.

accidentally intuited, “books of nothing” (sig. H3r). For these individuals, I suggest, reading F1 *Cymbeline* might have felt like waking from a dream.

Cymbeline, however, does not represent the final Brutan text or performance. As noted in the introduction, a cluster of new and reprinted historiographic texts, chronologies, and plays appeared in the years around 1630-34, the early years of Charles I’s “personal rule”. William Slatyer’s pictographic genealogy *Genethliacon* (1630) opens with illustrations of Brute and Innogen and was dedicated to King Charles. John Taylor’s 1630 edition of his *A Memorial of all the English Monarchs* includes the addition of Taylor’s declaration that “I follow the common opinion ... there was a BRVTE” (sig. B1r). Both argue – accurately or otherwise – that Brutan belief survived, or was perceived as surviving, by these authors and their stationers hoping for royal favour or success in print – an achievement for which Taylor had a notable talent. No single text or conclusive piece of evidence indicates why these years should see what appears to be a Brutan revival, including a 1634 staging of *Cymbeline* before Charles I. The final Brutan play to appear in print, *Fuimus Troes*, appeared in 1633, following the 1632 royal masque *Albions Trivmph* but was probably first performed many years before. John Milton’s *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle* was performed in 1634 and published anonymously in 1637. Each text figuratively enacts etiological erosion in very different ways. *Fuimus Troes* quixotically asserts Brutan historicity, whilst *Albions Trivmph* re-activates the propagandistic interaction of Brutan figures and monarchs evidenced throughout this thesis. However, as will be shown, in *Albions Trivmph*, performed at the outset of the “personal rule,” the monarch himself “becomes” the Brutan figure Albanactus. This moment of semiotic absorption is contrasted with *A Masque* which, in reviving the

drowned Sabren as the benevolent water goddess Sabrina, enacts in a single figure the imagery of erosion and “mythic” transformation explored in *Cymbeline*.

Fuimus Troes

It is curious, and a challenge to the notion of progression from one idea of Brutan historicity to another over the course of the early modern period, that *Fuimus Troes*, the final extant Brutan drama, is also the only text to explicitly cite and seemingly endorse Geoffrey of Monmouth and the *Historia*. This academic play, performed for and by students at Oxford’s Magdalen College, attempts to harmonise Roman and Brutan accounts of Julius Caesar’s invasion of Britain in a way that subtly authorises Brutan historicity. Even its title is taken from the *Aeneid* (“we were Trojans”) and draws the play’s Roman and British forces into the same ancestry.

Caesar’s *Commentaries* described the Romans’ clashes with indigenous British tribes in the south east of Britain. As noted, their leader, Cassibelan, is the first figure of British antiquity to be accepted as historical by those writers, such as Speed, who dismissed the Brutan histories (f. 170). The Brutan histories, however, also featured Cassibelan’s clashes with the Romans as a central narrative (Reeve and Wright 68-80). There were many differences between the two accounts, one difference in particular demonstrating their fundamental incompatibility. As Holinshed put it, “according to that which Cesar himselfe and other autenticke authors have written,” Britain was made “tributarie to the Romans by the conduct of the same Cesar”; however, “our histories farre differ from this, affirming that Cesar comming the second time, was by the Brittaines with valiancie and martiall prowesse beaten and repelled, as he was at the first” (f. 43). According to Caesar, the British had been overpowered and compelled to pay tribute to Rome (Trans. Hammond 5.22).

According to the Brutan tradition, it was Caesar who had been “beaten and repelled”. The British, then, were either a people entirely absent from the historiography of antiquity who emerged into recorded time only to suffer military defeat by their conqueror-chronicler; or, they were scions of Trojan founders and conquerors who gloriously fought off their continental invaders. Of core significance to this second conception of the British past was the notion of Britain and Rome’s shared Trojan origins. This preoccupation is materialised in the Oxford University play named on its title page, in what Lisa Hopkins describes as “its own bizarre typography” (“Trojans,” 38) as *Fvims Troes* Æneid 2. *The True Troianes* (sig. A2r). This triplicate title asserts Britain’s Trojan origins, posits the play as a kind of sequel to Virgil’s original, and foregrounds historiographic tensions by referring to “*True Troianes*,” a term that could refer to the play’s Britons, its Romans, or both. Each claimed Trojan origins via historiographies that were, as many early seventeenth-century writers insisted, fundamentally incompatible. *Fuimus Troes* attempts to reconcile these two positions.

Fuimus Troes was published in 1633, and attributed to Jasper Fisher by Anthony Wood, the seventeenth-century historian of Oxford (Butler “Introduction”). The date of the play’s original performance has been harder to ascertain.³⁸ Recent work by Wiggins examines Oxford’s records for unnamed plays performed during Fisher’s residence at Magdalen (vol. VII, ref. 1890). Finding a single instance of a suitable play, logged according to an appropriate genre – “tragedy” – in 1619, Wiggins proposes this as potentially being *Fuimus Troes*. The play was, according to its title page, “[p]ublikey represented by the Gentlemen Students of Magdalen Colledge in Oxford” (sig. A2r). This places the play within a tradition of academic

³⁸ Chris Butler cites Curran (*Roman* 261), who in turn cites Brinkley (92); Hopkins (38), and the Editors of *REED* (*Oxford* 2.810) admit no more secure dating than 1611-33.

performances that “were written for and seen by a select audience,” participation in which was seen as “contributing to the training of orators destined for the law courts and the pulpit” (Astington 19). This indication of the the pedagogical and intellectual aspirations of the form should, however, be balanced against much evidence that audiences were “frequently unruly,” with students passing out, even being stabbed or trampled, despite the oversight of armed guards, or “whifflers” (Elliott 69). Many extant university plays reveal the attitudes “of an elite in-group, sceptical if not downright scornful of those outside it” (Astington 22), thereby perhaps suggesting that *Fuimus Troes* expresses the historiographic bias and interests of a very specific textual community. However, Andrew Gurr quotes the prologue to Thomas Tomkis’s *Albumazar*, staged before King James at Trinity College in 1615, that it was performed in English “for the sake of the ladies in the audience,” whilst an earlier play, *Club Law* (c. 1599-1600), was “allegedly written in English so that the uneducated citizens of the town would understand it” (46). *Fuimus Troes* is in English and, whilst the playbook’s paratext includes un-glossed quotes in Latin, the play uses almost none and, in one case, when the character Eulinus quotes Ovid in Latin, this is followed immediately by its English translation, as if to accommodate non-Latin speakers: “For well my Poet saies, *Militat omnis Amans*, Each Louer is a Souldier” (sig. C1v).³⁹ Nor should it be imagined that, in being “academic,” *Fuimus Troes* is untheatrical. It opens with a Seneca-like dialogue between Mercury and the ghosts of the Brutus Brennus and his Roman enemy Camillus, whom Mercury has recalled

³⁹ *Fuimus Troes* is extremely careful in its historiography and chronology, as will be seen. The difficulty for early modern playwrights in keeping control of a play’s chronology can be observed in a small slip here, perceptible to only the play’s most pedantic spectators and readers: Ovid was not born until several years after Caesar’s invasion of Britain.

from the underworld (sig. A3r); frequent musical interludes, performed by a historiographically appropriate “Chorus of fiue Bardes laureate” and a harpist (sig. A2v) provide regular breaks in the action, whilst the inclusion of a clown-like cowardly soldier, the gluttonous Rollano, “a Belgicke,” seems again to recall an earlier theatrical era and, specifically, *Locrine*’s Strumbo.

Strikingly, the British general Cassibelan’s defiance of the Romans’ demand for tribute is performed via a ritual wherein the British generals kiss his sword (sig. C1v). This action seems to be associated with the ancient world and the Near East. Locrine kisses his sword before his suicide in *Locrine* (sig. K2r) and, in Thomas Goffe’s *The Courageous Turk, or Amurath the First* (1619; pub. 1632; DEEP ref. 787), the Turkish character Aladin calls upon his followers to show their loyalty against the protagonist Amurath by kneeling and kissing his sword (sig. F2v). Goffe’s play was performed at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1619, the same year proposed by Wiggins for *Fuimus Troes*. In Oxford this would have dimly recreated, in repertory terms, the Turkish-Brutan theatrical interactions examined in chapter two.⁴⁰ However, many of these dramaturgical strategies also seem to support a particular version of history, which is thus detectable not only in the dialogue’s dense classical and Brutan allusions, but in the play’s staging. Academic didacticism is evident in the precision of the play’s costumes, rituals, and stage directions, which give the impression of a

⁴⁰ *The Courageous Turk*, and a second play by Goffe, *The Raging Turk, or Bajazet the Second* (c. 1618; pub. 1631), also include Turkish characters and dynasties that correlate with plays synchronous with *Locrine*, *Tamburlaine*, which includes Bajazeth; Kyd’s *Solyman and Perseda* (c. 1592; pub. 1592; DEEP ref. 147), which features Amurath, and Peele’s *The Battle of Alcazar* (c. 1589; pub. 1594; DEEP ref. 195), which features as a powerful offstage presence “Great Amurath Emperor of the East” (sig. A3r).

species of historical reconstruction as well as suggesting substantial material preparations for, and investment in, the production.

Caesar's army enters, for example, bearing an "*Ensigne*, A two-neck'd Eagle displayed sable" (sig. A4v), whilst the British druids enter in "hats like Pyramids" and carrying "branches of Mistletoe" (sig. C3r). The British priests perform a ritual before a temple of Diana, "thou first guide of Brutus to this Ile" (sig. D2r), before the onstage spectacle of an "image of the Moone," below which a "Shrine opens" (sig. D1v). In terms of stage ritual and spectacle, the play prioritises and specifies the performance of ancient Britain. A closer examination of the text reveals the play's obsessive historiographic detail and a subtle, if persistent, engagement with Brutan conceptions of pre-Roman history.

Fuimus Troes is the only extant early modern drama to engage explicitly with the controversy over Brutan history, and it does so using strategies that are far more dependent upon sophisticated historiographic knowledge than the Brutan drama examined thus far, particularly in terms of the playbook's paratextual apparatus. Butler observes that, alongside its two historical military rivals, the play's "two main sources," Caesar's *Commentaries* and Geoffrey's *Historia*, might be "regarded as the real protagonist and antagonist among the *Dramatis Personae*" ("Introduction"). This is diagrammatically inscribed in the play's *dramatis personae*, which groups its characters according to the sources from which they derive – principally Caesar's *Commentaries* and, specifically, the fourth book of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*.

Chris Butler observes that by listing the character of Cassibelan twice, first as Caesar's Cassibellaunus, then as the *Historia*'s Cassibelane, the playbook seems to "assert an equivalence between Caesar and Geoffrey's texts as 'history'" whilst

presenting the two groups of characters as representative of these competing historiographies (“Introduction”). The play’s historiographical inclusiveness, however, bends and warps its characters. In order to accommodate the two histories’ differences, the British traitor Androgeus appears “onstage with his Caesarian double, Mandubratius” (Butler). Assimilating accounts in this way materialises through performance the notion that apparent incompatibilities might be harmonized as alternative perspectives on the same remote past. Yet this could also appear as a strategy of peopling the past with as many additional bodies as are required to preserve Brutan historicity, the synchronizing dramaturgical equivalent of Scaliger’s “proleptic time” resorting to situating certain chronicle events prior to the Creation in order to assimilate diverse ancient texts into a comprehensive universal history. One possible effect of this is to prioritise and strengthen Brutan historicity, rather than balance it with the Roman account. Brutan time is also supported by the use, throughout, and by both Roman and British characters, of the name “Cassibelane”. When *Fuimus Troes* is forced to choose between accounts, it chooses the Brutan. This effect is intensified by the play’s frequent references to both well-known and marginal figures of Brutan antiquity.

Of all the plays examined in this thesis, *Fuimus Troes* offers the deepest textual engagement with its Brutan sources since *Gorboduc*, 50-70 years earlier. Associations of landscape and founder are invoked: Locrine and Estrild’s drowned daughter Sabren, or Sabrine, endures as the personification of the river Severn, described as “that boyling streame, / Where Sabrine louely Damsell lost her breath” (sig. D1v). Guendolen appears in one of the play’s several songs as “The Amazon of her daies” (sig. H2v), whilst the play’s chorus refers to the obscure king Morindus, known only for having been eaten by a sea-monster (sig. H2v). One of the play’s two

female figures, neither of whom appears onstage, is named “only once ... and thus seems to be introduced into the narrative expressly for the purpose of having her name mentioned” (Hopkins, “Trojans” 45). The character’s name is Cordella (sig. B4r). These references are bound into the play’s cosmology, contributing to its sense of the past’s active engagement with the present and beyond into the afterlife. Towards the play’s end, a raging Cassibelan foresees the end of British rule as a vast cremation: “Let Britaines climactericall [i.e. terminal, decisive] yeere now runne, / The Series breake of seuentie Kings: Nay let / One vrne conclude our ashes and the worlds” (sig. H3v). The invocation of Britain’s seventy rulers asserts the vast reach of Brutan time, indicating the scale of the tragedy Cassibelan believes he faces. The druid Lantonus reflects upon an ancient prophecy, that “[t]he gods foretold these mischiefes long agoe, / In Eldells raigne, The Earth and Sky were fild / With prodigies, strange Sights, and hellish shapes ... / And bloody droppes speckled the grasse” (sig. C3v). The reference to Eldell, another obscure king known only for a rain of blood having fallen during his reign, demonstrates an ancient British familiarity with these accounts, suggesting them as generated by that history. Equally, Lantonus’s belief that these prodigies of antiquity have foretold the events of the present further endorses that antiquity as a metaphysical reality. The dying hero Nennius, brother of Lud, aspires to a specifically Brutan afterlife:

I long euen to behold those glorious Cloysters,
 Where Brutus, great Dunwallo, and his sonnes,
 Thrice noble Spirits walke.
 Thou mighty Enginer of this wondrous Globe,
 Protect this Ile, confound all forraine plots:

Graunt Thames and Tyber neuer ioyne thair chanells. (sig. E4v)

Nennius's hope to walk with his ancestors invokes a cluster of kings and plays: Brute, the founder of Britain, and Mulmutius Dunwallo, the king who reunited Britain following the civil wars triggered by Ferrex and Porrex, the sons of Gorboduc, and Mulmutius's own sons, Brennus and Belinus, themselves the subjects of several lost and extant Brutan plays. Nennius's wish that "Thames and Tyber" might never flow together, as the play's competing sources are being forced to do, is, in this sense, subtly undercut as the character of Caesar himself, the author of the *Commentaries* that seemed to refute Brutan historicity, is enlisted in the Brutan cause, lamenting that he must "draw my sword against the stocke / Of thrice-renowned Troy" (sig. C4v). A conversation between Caesar and Hulacus, a captured British priest, ends with a further prophecy that extends the metaphysical agency of Brutan time, configuring it as the underlying logic of Caesar's eventual death: "A Brutus strong / Repayes in Fine: / Thy brutish wrong / To Brutus line" (sig. H3v). Caesar's assassination by Brutus, the play predicts, will be a vengefully actualised pun, the nature of his death determined by the name of the man whose descendents he has wronged. *Fuimus Troes* represents the synthesis of Brutan and Roman accounts with the effect of asserting Brutan historicity from its ground zero position at the "climactericall yeere" of Brutan time. At the metaphysical level of prophecy, the etymology of Britain's founder determines the manner of death for Caesar, the Roman whose written works had become for many historiographers the ultimate rebuke to Brute's existence in historical time. Conversely, the court masque *Albions Trivmph* appears to ravel up Brutan iconography into the person of the monarch himself, thereby uprooting it from the source of its resonance and meaning.

Albions Trivmph

Charles I's personal rule was not, in itself, exceptional. James had failed to call parliament between 1611 and 1621 (Butler, *Theatre* 13; Hirst 160). However, many critics agree that, unlike James, Charles during this time "constructed his own imagined world" (Brown, "Monarchy," 25) through the introduction of new court protocols, rituals, and hierarchies that triggered a "process of isolating the social magic of the Crown within a tightly controlled court culture" (Whitted 4). These orders expressed Charles's "concern for order and majesty," and new orders of 1629 and 1631 focussed specifically on behaviour in the vicinity of royal palaces and enforced the maintenance of hierarchies "both in private and in public" (Hirst 162). This inwardness was, to an extent, an illusion. Food riots reached a 100-year peak in Kent in 1630-31 (Hirst 169), and the crown's self-image of divinely sanctioned aloofness was compromised by its dependence on funds "derived from monopolies" (Whitted 2), a series of "fiscal devices which estranged those on whose support [Charles] was most dependent" (Butler, *Theatre* 16). Nevertheless, during the personal rule, "an emphasis upon the [royal] prerogative replaced the rhetoric and traditions of communion between the king and his subjects" (Sharpe, *Criticism* 298). The royal person also seems to have absorbed and superseded much of the iconography that once represented dialogues between different institutions, as well as the past and present. Despite the familiar temptation to read Charles's reign as containing the seeds of unavoidable collapse into civil war, in the 1630s he may have seemed destined for "absolute monarchy on the continental model" (Butler, *Theatre* 14), ruling as he was at a time of uninterrupted peace. And this is how it may have

appeared at the time, particularly to the audiences of court masques and command performances given by the King's Men and others.

The records of Charles's Master of the Revels, Henry Herbert, show how closely Charles worked to construct and manage his entertainments, interceding on issues of censorship with Davenant's *The Witts* (pub. 1636) and enjoying a play, Shirley's *The Gamester*, written "out of a plot of the king's" given to Shirley, and which Charles claimed to Herbert was "the best play he had seen for seven years" (Bawcutt 187). The Christmas season during which these actions took place, 1633-4, also featured a performance of *Cymbeline* on January 1st that was "Well likte by the kinge" (Bawcutt 185).⁴¹

The records suggest a degree of repertory, or design.⁴² A revival of *The Taming of the Shrew* was followed by Fletcher's sequel to that play, *The Tamer*

⁴¹ *The Witts* contains an intriguing reference to "the archer Cymbeline" (sig. B4r). This is unique in early modern plays other than *Cymbeline* itself and, given that *The Witts* was being read, censored, and licensed by Herbert only weeks before the performance of *Cymbeline*, hints at possible metadramatic interconnections between the plays and masques performed that season.

⁴² Herbert's records give the full repertory of the 1633-34 season's performances (Bawcutt 184-7): "Richard the Thirde" (William Shakespeare), on November 17th; "The Young Admirall" (James Shirley), on November 19th; "The Taming of the Shrew" (Shakespeare), on November 26th; "The Tamer Tamd" (John Fletcher), on November 28th; "The Loyal Subject" (Fletcher), on December 10; "Hymens Holliday" (not extant; attr. William Rowley), on December 16; "Cymbeline" (Shakespeare), on January 1; "The Faithfull Shepheardesse" (Fletcher), on January 6; "The Guardian" (Philip Massinger), January 12; "The Tale of the Tub" (Ben Jonson) 14 January; "The Winters Tale" (Shakespeare), January 16; "The Witts" (William Davenant), on January 28; "The Night Walkers" (Fletcher), January 30; "The Inns of court gentlemen presented their masque at court" (*The Triumph of Peace*, Shirley), on February 3; "The Gamester" (Shirley), February 6; "[T]he Kinge dancte his Masque" (*Coelum Britannicum*, Shirley), February 18.

Tam'd, in November (Bawcutt 185), showing that one performance could be experienced as referencing or following from another. A performance of Fletcher's *The Faithfull Shepherdess* followed *Cymbeline* on January 6th 1633/4 and, as Herbert records, utilised scenery from a masque performed for the queen the previous year (Bawcutt 185). This shows a blurring of the thematic and material boundaries between masque and narrative drama, indicating ways in which the season's entertainments might be viewed as intermingling. For this performance, *The Faithfull Shepherdess* opened with a prologue written for and spoken to Charles and Henrietta Maria, declaring them "[w]elcom as Peace t'unwalled Citties, when / Famine and Sword leave them more graves then men" (sig. A4v).⁴³ This exhortation to peace would seem to follow from *Cymbeline*'s irenic design and concluding "peace," further suggesting, with a performance of the similarly themed *The Winter's Tale* on January 16th, that this theme was sustained throughout the season. This preoccupation peaked on February 3rd when James Shirley's Inns of Court masque *The Triumph of Peace* (pub. 1633) dominated the London streets, concluding with a masque in Whitehall designed to pacify Charles following a controversy over the lawyer William Prynne's antheatrical tract *Histromastix* (1633), which had been perceived as attacking Henrietta Maria's participation in court performances. The figure of Irene, or Peace, sings aloud the rhetorical question if this "glorious night, / Wherein two skies are to be seene, / One starry, but an aged sphere another here, / Created new and brighter from the Eyes of King and Queene?" (sig. C2v). Themes of ancient British etiology emerge in the season's closing masque, Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum* (pub. 1634), which presents a dance of ancient British worthies, "of these famous Isles, /

⁴³ These additions were included in a new quarto published shortly after the royal performance which, as with *King Lear*, is given prominent mention on the title-page.

That long have slept, in fresh and lively shapes,” which the presenter Mercury describes explicitly as being both “rude / And old Abiders here, and in them view / The point from which your full perfections grew” (sig. E1r). A dance is then given by a company of “Picts, the naturall Inhabitants of this Isle” (sig. E1v), presenting British antiquity as both primal and non-Brutan. These themes, of peace, ancient Britain, and a semiotic inwardness centring upon the gathering of virtue and meaning exclusively to the person of the king, are a persistent presence throughout the 1633-34 Christmas season, a context in which the choice of *Cymbeline* is entirely explicable. The same year, the artist Paul Reubens was busily working on designs for the Banqueting Hall ceiling, the allegorical designs of which centred on the apotheosis of James VI and I, who ascends to heaven astride an eagle (Strong 52).⁴⁴ These irenic themes were established and encapsulated some time before, however, via Charles’s personation of the quasi-Brutan figure Albanactus, in Aurelian Townshend and Inigo Jones’s masque, *Albions Trivmph*, performed at Whitehall on Twelfth Night 1631/2.

Albions Trivmph establishes themes of platonic love and a classicised aesthetic that would permeate the personal rule’s cultural expression. It featured the king and queen, and celebrated their union as a mystical expression of a divine cosmic order. Townshend’s introduction to the print edition outlines in detail the setting and the characters to be played by the royal couple. The setting is “*ALBIPOLIS* the chiefe City of *ALBION*” (sig. A2r), represented by a backdrop showing a “Roman atrium” (sig. A3r). The tug-of-war between Roman and Brutan accounts of history seems here both concluded and irrelevant. The characters are, as seen with the etymology of Brutan origins, explicated by the resonance of their names:

⁴⁴ Work on the ceiling itself, however, does not seem to have taken place until some time between 1634 and the 1640s (Strong 13).

The Triumppher, *ALBANACTVS*, And *ALBA* this Ilands Goddesse. Names not improper, eyther for the Place, or for the Persons: *ALBION* being (as it once was) taken for *England*; *ALBANACTVS*, for the King, *Quasi in Albania natus: Borne in Scotland*. And *ALBA*, for the Queene whose native Beauties have a great affinity with all Purity and Whitenesse. (sig. A2r)

The figure of Albanactus, then, whilst deriving his name from the son of Brute and martial hero of *Lochrine*, is dissociated from that narrative, which goes unmentioned, and instead serves the purpose of representing Charles's Scottish origins, thereby perhaps conflating England and Scotland in one body, that of Charles as "the ideal Platonic ruler before the temple of Jove" (Strong 23). This version of Albanacht is not present, as he was in *Triumphs of Re-united Britainia*, to advocate, poesie historically or otherwise, for the intercession of the past with the present in the cause of national union or royal glory. He has founded nothing. He exists only, and has meaning only, according to the moment and terms in which the king personates him. Indeed, the names of triumpher, country, city, and queen, are locked within a closed, self-authorising etymological circuit. In the masque, the god Mercury descends and foretells Albanactus's coming. He will be "[m]ighty, as the Man design'd / To weare those Bayes; Heroicke, as his mind; / Iust, as his actions; Glorious, as his Reigne. / And like his Vertues, Infinite in Treyne" (sig. A4v). He is described by the character Publius, who represents the common people of Albipolis, as "*ALBANACTVS CAESAR*" (sig. B2r), a title that conjoins the Brutan name with the "imperial dignities that were so often associated with James" (Parry, *Golden Age* 190) via the associations with Augustus examined in *Cymbeline*. Yet both titles are severed from

the figures they evoke, the source of meaning reversed: the presence and body of the king provides the only necessary context. Albanactus finally appears before a scene of a temple of Jupiter, costumed “like a Romane Emperour” (sig. B1v) and is exhorted by the figures of Cupid and Diana to surrender and love Alba in order to “make our CAESAR greater yet” (sig. B4v). Struck by Cupid’s arrows, Albanactus is described as “yeilding to the Gods”; he “mooves downe the steps in a stately pace to Musick made by the Chorus of Sacrificers” (sig. C1r). Silent, in the convention of court masques (McManus, *Women* 7), Charles descends from his throne on stage. He dances, then takes his place besides Alba, the queen, concluding his performance.

Stephen Orgel has noted that the masque is “a wold of absolutes, in which all action is inherent in the nature of the individual figures” (*Jonsonian* 197). *Albions Trivmph* represses the historiography upon which it draws in favour of Charles as the absolute and individual figure through which meaning is determined. Charles’s silence is entirely conventional to the royal masque genre; yet just as the conventions of the Elizabethan playhouse enacted a particular effect upon *Locrine*’s vision of Brutan history, so here Charles’s conventional silence as Albanactus might be seen to present an image of completed etiological erosion. We have seen how, in the English pageants and royal entries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, performers’ bodies served as uncanny conduits through which “lurking” Brutan founders might both reassert the spirit of a place and intercede on behalf of the present; how in *Gorboduc* Brutan drama was inaugurated in order that events of British antiquity might be recovered and performed in order to influence Elizabeth I’s political choices; how for James VI and I’s union project Brutan iconography was deployed in strategies, ultimately futile, of persuasion, even as the historiography buckled and collapsed into *Historica passio*. Throughout the early modern era, Brutan rulers were materialised in

order to confront, in one way or another, their putative royal descendents. In *Albions Triumph*, conversely, the Brutan figure's energies are unravelled in from their animating contexts, silencing the dialogue between the past and the present: Albanactus is not himself powerful, but only as "mighty," "heroic," and "just," as Charles is already. He brings no pre-existing qualities or characteristics, no originary essence, to bestow upon the monarch. It is a closed circuit, and the performer's body summons only Charles as the idea of absolute, divinely endorsed monarchy. The semiotics of the "imagined world" of Charles I's personal rule absorb the fictive Brutan origins they have invoked. Albanactus breaks away from the landmass of Brutan history and is absorbed into the performed presence of the monarch. In Milton's *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*, however, the Brutan figure of Sabren escapes human temporality altogether. Reconfigured as Sabrina, a nymph of the river Severn, she fulfils the logic of founder, place, and essence proposed in Chapter Two in a manner that releases her from the confines of historicity.

A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle (Comus)

If *Locrine* showed the innocent Sabren's suicide, leaping into the waters of the river that will memorialise her under the name Severn, then Milton's *A Masque*, performed approximately forty years later, sees Sabren re-emerge from the waters, having undergone a transformation into the "goddess of the river" (f. 29). *A Masque* was written for John, Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales. It was performed on September 29 1634 at Ludlow Castle by three of Bridgewater's children, Alice (aged 15), John (11), and Thomas (9), their music master Henry Lawes, and unnamed others. The masque tells of three children lost in the Welsh forests.¹ Topographically, *A Masque* brings the performance of Brutian history tantalisingly close to its putative origins in the *liber vetustissimus*, written in the "British tongue" (Reeve and Wright 4) – that is, Welsh – from which Geoffrey of Monmouth claimed to have translated his *Historia*. Yet, just as that book was almost certainly Geoffrey's enabling fiction, so *A Masque* reveals the fragility of Brutian time's "mythic" afterlife.

Alice's character, named only as "The Lady," becomes separated from her brothers and is menaced by Comus, the barbarous hybrid child of Bacchus and the sorceress Circe. Comus magically traps the Lady in a chair in order to beguile her of her virginity. Aided by a benevolent Attendant Spirit, the brothers scare away Comus but cannot free the Lady from the "stonie fetters fixt, and motionless" in which she is trapped until the Spirit summons "Sabrina faire" from "[v]nder the glassie, coole, translucent wave," that she might "[l]isten and save" the Lady (f. 29): Sabrina sprinkles drops "from my fountaine pure" upon the "marble venom'd seate" (f. 31), releasing the Lady. Kat Lecky has argued that Sabrina "naturalizes the Lady into the

¹ John and Thomas had performed at court in *Coelum Britannicum* in February 1634, only a few months before *A Masque* (Lewalski 304).

Welsh body politic” (133): that is, the performance has an immediate function of resituating Alice Bridgewater within the border country she now occupies whilst avoiding her absorption into its more threatening wildness. This sustains the purity necessitated by her role as her father’s marriageable offspring.

However, there is also a historiographic context. Whilst Sabrina speaks nothing of her origins, the Spirit recounts her role as told through the fate of Sabren in *Locrine*, echoing, deliberately or otherwise, that play’s depiction of her death as suicide. As Schwyzer has noted, in order to function as a figure protective of chastity, “Milton’s greatest innovation is the complete elision of Sabrina’s bastardy”; that is, her origin as Locrine and Estrild’s illegitimate child (37). Erin Murphy has explored Sabrina’s relationship with Brutian historiography, describing her as a figure “disconnected from mortal time and history” that cannot quite be squared with the Spirit’s “genealogical impulses” to tell Sabrina’s history (101): Sabrina “no longer functions as a lineal connection to the past” (102). Yet, as we saw through figures such as Brennus at Bristol, or Ebrauk at York in 1486, a sense of presentness needn’t necessitate severance from history as it does in *Albions Trivmph*. However, there is clearly something different in Milton’s treatment, in the way in which Sabrina does not simply emerge from history, from an uncanny “lurking” immanence. She has instead been transformed, the Spirit explains. Pursued by Gwendolen and having leapt into the river, the mortal Sabrina came to the attention of the “water Nymphs that in the bottome playd” and who thus

Held up their pearled wrists and tooke her in,

Bearing her straite to aged Nereus hall

Who piteous of her woes reatd [sic.] her lanke head,

And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectar'd lavers strewd with asphodil,
And through the porch, and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oyles till she reviv'd,
And underwent a quicke, immortall change
Made goddesse of the river. (f. 29)

At the hands of the river nymphs, Sabrina undergoes a “quicke, immortal change” that mirrors the far slower history-to-poetry transformation of accounts of antiquity proposed by early modern theorists such as Puttenham. In *A Masque*, this cultural and literary process is recreated as a physical metamorphosis enacted through the medium of water, just as Imogen’s embodiment of etiological erosion might have been perceived as occurring through the element of air in *Cymbeline*. However, as Schwyzer notes, this sense of mythic deepening is misleading: “the goddess Sabrina appears to have had no place in regional lore” (21). The “silver lake” of which Sabrina is goddess is in fact shallow and localised to a particular, elite textual community rather than the folkloric networks of myth – very different to the popular tradition that sustained Sabren as a figure of lived history from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries. Instead, we return to post-mythic Brutan history as explored in *Cymbeline*. As suggested earlier, the ascent of Jupiter in *Cymbeline* may be seen as signalling the end of pagan time at the moment of the Incarnation. Similarly, the stage direction “Sabrina descends and the Ladie rises out of her seate” (f. 32) might be seen, figuratively, as a moment at which Brutan time, its brief function as myth over almost before it has begun, sinks into forgetfulness.

Philip Schwyzer has suggested that, in *A Masque*, “Milton wrested Locrine's daughter into a new form ... a second, literary immortality while her baser predecessors, so many luckless Habrens, Sabrens, and Sabrines, have been drowned anew in antiquarian obscurity” (23). This observation touches on something at the core of my thesis. Brutan time was finally eroded as history, it outlived its propagandistic usefulness, and its traceability to a single author and text foreclosed its status as myth. I would suggest, qualifying Schwyzer’s observation a little, that the literary life of Brutan history has also retreated into the relative obscurity of academic and cultural-historical interest. If Brutan time has a cultural life at all in the twenty-first century it is in drama, kept above water by the sustained commercial primacy of the “Shakespeare” industry. Although in this thesis I have worked to bring together as full an account as I can of early modern Brutan drama, it would be disingenuous to claim that the road did not lead back somewhere to my affective response as a reader and spectator of *Cymbeline* and, particularly, of *King Lear*. It is perhaps ironic that the dramatic texts created in response to the Brutan histories’ extraordinary medieval and early modern resonance are now a principal cause of why we return to those histories. If Brutan time died as history sometime in the seventeenth century, it survives today not as poesie historical, or as myth, but in the form through which it has been explored here: as play.

Conclusions

Sometime after the publication of John Taylor's doggerel work *A Memoriall of all the English Monarchs* in 1630, a copy was purchased by the Staffordshire book-collector Frances Wolfreston (1607-77), whose library has been said to represent "the leisure reading of a literate lady in her country house" (Morgan 200). As noted in Chapter One, the 1630 edition of Taylor's *Memoriall* summarised the lives of "English" rulers from Brute to Charles I, adding at the outset the strident marginal note "I follow the common opinion ... there was a BRVTE" (sig. B1r). Wolfreston's collection, and her occasional marginalia, offer a glimpse of the ways in which drama, popular print, and historiography intersected for early modern readers and complicated the reading of British origins via engagement with the Brutian histories. Without the foregoing work on these intersections certain elements of Wolfreston's reading, and the textual community she created for her household through her choice of books, would be less apparent.

Wolfreston owned several plays, including Heywood's *2 Iron Age* (pub. 1632), in which she inscribed the observation that she found it "trouer then the old history bouk" (transcribed in Gerritsen 273). Here, we have evidence of an early modern reader comparing drama and an "old history bouk" for the historical verity of Trojan antiquity, and finding the drama "truer". *2 Iron Age*, as observed in Chapter Four, includes the prophecy that the fleeing Aeneas's descendent Brute "shall reare great Britaines Troy-nouant" (sig. E2v). Wolfreston, then, is favouring the historicity of a play endorsing Britain's Trojan origins. These comments have prompted Claire Kenward to ask "[w]hat is the old history book which Wolfreston ... had in mind in her reading of Heywood's play?" (99). This is, to an extent, unanswerable, although Woolf has observed that amongst her "personal library of verse, drama, and moral

theological writings,” Wolfreton also owned “a significant number of histories,” including Camden's *Britannia* (“Feminine” 642). As demonstrated, Camden’s 1586 work, published in English translation in 1610 and in several further seventeenth-century editions, has been cited as the death-knell of Brutan time. Here, it sits on the shelf alongside popular drama, and Taylor’s pro-Brutan chronology. Certainly an “old history bouk” by Wolfreton’s time, *Britannia* could perhaps be the work she refutes, in tune with Taylor and Heywood.

I have argued that the Brutan histories carried a powerful affective resonance for English readers and playgoers, a means of self-understanding via Rothstein’s concept that “origin defines essence”. Whether in performance or on the page Brutan figures provided etiological models upon which personal and familial identities might be inscribed, as shown by the many manuscript prose *Bruts* in which medieval and early modern readers added their own genealogies to household copies (Radulescu, “Gentry,” 192). Wolfreton’s collection included an analogous example of this type of textual inheritance; a copy of Chaucer’s works containing marginalia by many earlier readers identified as “Wolfretons’s female ancestors,” providing “an example of how several successive generations of early modern female readers negotiated their engagement with a literary text within a domestic context” (Wiggins, “Chaucer,” 77). For Wolfreton, or someone within the household textual community her collection created, this identification was also expressed through Brutan personification. Taylor’s *Memoriall* includes thumbnail woodcut portraits of each monarch (see Chapter One). In Wolfreton’s copy, someone has sketched two cursory faces (sig. A4r). These are noted by Paul Morgan as “crowned heads” (219). What is not noted, however, is that a more finished sketch, appearing later in the *Memoriall* (sig. B2r), is

not simply a “crowned head” but a copy of the thumbnail portrait representing “Queen *Cordeilla*” on the opposing page (sig. B1v). It is perhaps striking that an early modern woman reader presented with portraits of British and English rulers from Brute to Charles I, should choose not only a Brutan figure, but one of only two Brutan women rulers, to reproduce in portrait. This, I suggest, is evidence of the kind of personal, personified interaction I have been arguing for, and this marginal drawing may be seen as a species of self-recognition achieved through the lens of Brutan history.

Wolfreton appears to have owned more works by Taylor than any other writer, and thus her note in 2 *Iron Age*, combined with the marginal portrait of Cordelia suggests some sympathy for Brutan history. However, when a copy of the 1655 quarto of *King Lear* was added to the collection, it brought with it that text’s disruptive *Historica passio*, its violent negation of Brutan time through the ahistorical deaths of its protagonists, namely Cordelia. By the mid-seventeenth century, then, *Britannia* may have sat alongside Heywood’s Trojan plays and Taylor’s Brutan chronology in Wolfreton’s collection. Both texts demonstrate particular personal engagement via their annotation; *King Lear* introduced further disruption via the very medium through which Wolfreton appears to have processed a sense of historical truth: drama. Brutan etiology, the means of its erosion, and the dramatic texts that both resisted and responded to that erosion, are all present in Wolfreton’s reading. Her marginalia attest to the intertextual and affective ways in which Brutan history and its erosion might be experienced on a personal level, and that Brutan figures – here, Cordelia – might provide a locus for the understanding of origins and, in the form of *Historica passio*, the diminution of those origins through performed history

and its textual records. In these ways, Wolfreton's collection encapsulates the centuries of theatrical and historiographic intertextuality explored throughout this study.

The motivation for this thesis is a relatively simple one: to investigate early modern plays that represented or reproduced narratives and characters drawn from ancient British history, and to explore the ways in which these dramas may have both represented and complicated the model of British origins established by Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*. Quickly, however, the parameters and terminology that are central to this approach begin, like the Brutan histories, to erode. Terms such as "British," "history," and "mythic," are limiting and insufficiently accommodating of the dissonance evidenced by those complex responses to the Brutan histories from authors such as Harvey and Camden, or in dramas from *Leir* to *Fuimus Troes*. It is also insufficient to talk about the "history play" when so much of the evidence derives from civic spectacle, the court masque, as well as from plays such as *No-body and Some-body* that spill over the boundaries of traditional generic classification. Additionally, it is important to situate drama that purports to represent the lived past more closely with the competing and diverse historiographic records and historical consciousnesses of London and England's textual communities. As noted, whilst some observers experienced jarring disparities between performed history and the historiographic record, for many other audience members performed history *was* history.

What I have not found, or argued for, is an identifiable "canon" of Brutan performance. As demonstrated, the surviving evidence suggests that each piece can be set within wider dramaturgical, literary, and cultural trends lying beyond an isolated

interest in, or approach to, the Brutan histories. For example, the inclusion of a number of Brutan dramas in Henslowe's *Diary* between 1592 and 1600 can be situated within a London-wide commercial and repertorial focus on "historical" source material of all kinds, from classical myth, the Old Testament, Middle-Eastern histories, and English history from the post-Roman period to the Tudor era. The slight rise in Brutan drama published in the early years of James VI and I's reign is, as has long been recognised, a response to the propagandistic utilisation of Brutan and Arthurian iconography in the service of the project to unite England and Scotland. Brutan drama was not a genre, and the texts that survive reflect the dramaturgy of the places and times in which they were produced: *Gorboduc* is manifestly a product of the Seneca-influenced Inns of Court milieu; *Leir* reflects closely what is known of the practice and repertory of the Queen's Men and early-1590s playhouse practice and its publication in 1605 accords with the interest in Brutan subject matter at that time; *Cymbeline* is defined by its Jacobean context, in both its irenic Romano-British concerns and the wider dramaturgical trends, such as tragicomedy, to which it is a response.

Yet to suggest that each example of performed Brutan history appears to fit closely within its cultural context does not preclude the possibility that Brutan subject matter might provoke distinct effects. As I have argued, the particular effects of Brutan drama might be found in its interaction with the wider historiographic collapse of the Brutan histories as an accepted account of British origins. This four-hundred-year-old tradition, which claimed to stand for a tradition of millennia, was deeply embedded within all social strata of English society as an affective, intellectual, and cultural habit of thought. The distinct effects of Brutan drama, I suggest, are to be

found in the moments when it intersects with the varying, fluctuating, disorientating, and often deeply felt modalities of belief in the Brutan histories. Thus *Locrine*, despite, or even because of, its condition as a generic response to the popular Near-Eastern dramas of its time – notably *Tamburlaine* – can speak to its English audience of their collective origins in ways that no other Tamburlainian drama could. Similarly, *The Trivmphs of Re-vnited Britania*, in reviving *Locrine*'s gloomy suicides to celebrate James's vision of union, may be seen as standing apart from other examples of Jacobean civic pageantry for those audience members and readers for whom the Brutan histories had resonance.

Much scholarship has explored and demonstrated the complexities and emotive nature of the early modern historiographic debates regarding Brutan historicity. Yet, as Nashe's account of audience responses to Talbot in *1 Henry VI* shows, performed history could provide a uniquely affective experience of connection with the past. The embodied presences of Albanacht or Lud thus had enormous potential for audiences to commune with their ancestral origins. Conversely, the artificiality of certain dramas and events might also have the potential to undermine or complicate these origins. Examples of this might include *Leir*'s temporal and theological displacement, or *No-body and Some-body* forcing its Brutan king Elidure to share the stage with a character whose name and costume asserted a contagious sense of non-being. Brutan drama was unique to its era not because it demonstrates consistent or distinct qualities of plotting or theme, although a preoccupation with the division of kingdoms and warring siblings is certainly prevalent and perhaps resonates with the spreading awareness of etiological erosion. The particularities of its subject matter related to its capacity to represent and define models of pagan, pre-Roman

British origins; and it was unique to its era because it was watched and read by a culture undergoing a complex and extended process of etiological realignment. Its distinctiveness lies in the intersection of these two factors. The relative invisibility of this distinctiveness to many modern readers demonstrates usefully how completely the Brutan histories were eroded as a living cultural force.

One insistently recurring motif, however, is that of the monarch confronted with an embodied Brutan founder. These encounters often occur at key moments of political instability or transformation in ways that might indicate both shifting attitudes to Brutan history and a variety of ways in which monarch and particular institutions might interact. As noted in closing Chapter Four, there is a great difference in the implied relationship between Henry VII and Brennus encountering one another publicly at the gates of Bristol, and Charles I during his personal rule absorbing the semiotic remnants of the Brutan founder Albanacht before a private elite audience. Between these two points, however, nuances of relationship are discernible. Whilst the Inner Temple worked to school Elizabeth I on the importance of succession through *Gorboduc*'s appropriation of Brutan narratives, the King's Men both endorse James's vision of the importance of British union whilst knocking out the keystones of their chosen vehicle, the historical account of Lear. If there is a discernible thematic drift across the monarchical-Brutan encounters recorded between 1486 and 1634, it may be that the Brutan is gradually absorbed into the concerns and iconography of the crown, thereby weakening its mediating function. This, perhaps, might be interpreted as a symptom of etiological erosion.

This study also offers avenues for further enquiry. After all, early modern historical doubt was not limited to the Brutan histories. A similar study of drama

representing classical myth would certainly turn up early modern discussions regarding the historicity or otherwise of the Trojan wars, or the human origins of euhemerised Olympian gods. Yet these narratives' haziness was already well-served by theories of euhemerism and poesis historical. Their affective force was substantially less grounded in appeals to historicity than that of the Brutus histories; their symbolic value was sufficient. However, one under-examined area where issues of dissonance, textual community, and drama's conflicting powers of affect and erosion might be usefully applied is the early modern biblical drama, touched on in this study via *A Looking Glass for London and England*. Historiographic doubt over details of biblical history was possible at this time, and the dissonant reception of performed biblical history in such a theologically turbulent age would reward further study.

Another issue of Brutus drama that has not been adequately explored here is the representation of Brutus women as agents of historical change. *Lochner's* Guendolen, Estrild, and Sabren, and the royal daughters of *Leir* and *Lear* all represent powerful political figures, determining and shaping the history in which they appear. Wolfreston's marginal portrait of Cordelia, for example, might provide the starting point for a consideration not only of the performance of Brutus women, but for the ways these personifications may have resonated for early modern women readers and playgoers.

The centrality of the London playhouses and print industry to the survival of dramatic texts has meant that this study has been acutely England- and London-centric. An antidote to this might come in the form of work engaging with the representation and tradition of English regional founders and etiology in drama. One

region that seems to sustain perhaps the most consistent embodied identity throughout the performances studied is Cornwall, from the pageant figure of Corineus through his consistently rough-mannered, often honourable, though always potentially dangerous, stage descendents. Precedent may be found in two Cornish-language plays combining saints' tales with spectacular accounts of ancient Cornish dukes: *Bewnans Ke* was written down in the sixteenth century but may date from the fifteenth century (Thomas and Williams xlv), and *Bewnans Meriasek*, was recorded in a manuscript dated 1505 (Stokes v). Together, these rare surviving examples of performed regional history might provide valuable context for the treatment of ancient Cornwall and Cornishness in early modern drama and thus provide a more in-depth case-study of how individual Bruton founders and the typologies they established could speak to English or archipelagic identities.

Excepting perhaps the dissonance that exists between orthodox religious accounts of the past and the historiography that contradicts them, we are unlikely to see a repeat of the full-scale historiographic eradication of entire epochs that took place in the early modern era. Thus the Bruton dramas written, performed, and printed at this time stand testament to both a culture's deep-seated need to possess, embody, and encounter its origins, and to the disorientating energies released when those origins begin to erode.

Appendix One: A Chronology of the Brutan Rulers

This chart provides a list of Brutan rulers and regnal dates to assist the reader in navigating the many names and dynastic associations used in Brutan drama. Those rulers who appear in Brutan drama are noted with the dramas in which they appeared and the dramas in which they may have appeared but where evidence is lacking. The chart also demonstrates that certain epochal moments in the Brutan histories proved particularly evocative for the makers of performed history, clustering particularly at the beginning of the Brutan line, its end in the civil wars triggered by Ferrex and Porrex, and in the years following the re-establishment of monarchy by Mulmutius Dunwallo; that is, from Brute to the joint reigns of Brennus and Belinus.

Regnal dates are taken from John Stow's *Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles*, which he records as counting down to the Incarnation or, in current usage, BCE. I have chosen the *Summarie* in part because its popularity and relative affordability mean that its regnal dates are amongst the most widely accessible of the many variants available to early modern readers. It also has the symbolic virtue of having been published in 1565, the same year as *Gorboduc*, thus becoming available on the London book market at the same time as the first published Brutan drama.

Where spelling variants may cause confusion due to usage in a play or performance addressed in the thesis (e.g. "Lear" or Stow's "Leire"), the dramatic source is favoured, and indicated by the name appearing in bold. The rulers' names are sometimes given in the Latinised version by Stow, and sometimes in the Anglicised versions that Stow claims are used by "vulgare Hystoriographiers" (f. 20r), i.e. in the case of the king "Helius," or "Hely".

Name and regnal date:	Appears in: A question mark indicates that the appearance is possible but uncertain. This is usually in relation to plays or performances for which no text is extant.	Notes: Narrative context for dramatic appearances with the staging, and possible staging, of additional Brutan figures noted where relevant.
Brute (1108)	<i>Locrine; The Conquest of Brute; The Triumphs of Re-united Britania</i>	Brute divided Britain between his sons Locrine, Camber, and Albanacht. He awarded Cornwall to his general Corineus. These founding actions are the subject of <i>Locrine's</i> first act. Albanacht provides the foundation for Charles I's performance as Albanactus in <i>Albions England</i> .
Locrine (1084)	<i>Locrine; The Conquest of Brute (?); The Triumphs of Re-United Britania</i>	Locrine attempted to divorce his wife Guendolen in favour of his lover, Estrild. Guendolen revolted with Cornish troops, killing Locrine, Estrild, and their daughter Sabren. Sabren appears as the water nymph Sabrina in <i>A Masque Performed at</i>

		<i>Ludlow Castle.</i>
Guendolen (1063)	<i>Lochrine; Madon of Britain (?)</i>	Guendolen ruled in the minority of her son, Madan.
Madan (1053)	<i>Lochrine; Madon of Britain (?)</i>	Madan appears as a child in <i>Lochrine</i> 's final scene. A dissolute, violent, and lascivious king, Madan was eaten by wolves.
Mempricus (1009)		
Ebrauk (989)	Henry VII's entry at York; <i>King Ebrauk with All His Sons</i>	Ebrauk was the founder of York, and was known for having twenty sons and thirty daughters.
Brute Greenshield (929)	<i>King Ebrauk with All His Sons</i> (?); <i>Brute Greenshield</i>	Brute Greenshield was Ebrauk's son. He was said to have invaded France and won a victory at Hainault.
Leil (917)		
Lud Ruddibras (892)		

Bladud (863)	<i>The Conqueste of Brute (?)</i>	Bladud was said to have discovered the hot springs at Bath; as such he may have featured in the lost <i>The Conqueste of Brute</i> , the extended title of which is recorded in Henslowe's <i>Diary</i> and refers to the "firste fynding of the bathe". This would have made <i>Conqueste</i> an episodic play with a highly expansive timespan.
Lear (844)	<i>Leir; King Lear</i>	King Lear divided Britain between his daughters, triggering a disastrous civil war from which his estranged but loyal daughter Cordelia saved him, by re-taking Britain with the Gallian, or French, army.
Cordelia (805)	<i>Leir; King Lear</i>	Cordelia ruled for five years after her father's death, but was usurped by her nephews Morgan and Cunedagus. Imprisoned and despairing, she took her own life.
Morgan (800)		
Cunedagus (799)		

Rivallo (766)		
Gurgustus (721)		
Scicilius (684)		
Iago (636)		
Kynimacus (612)		
Gorboduc (559)	<i>Gorboduc; Ferex and Porex; 2 Seven Deadly Sins</i>	Sources vary on details but agree that Gorboduc divided Britain between his sons Ferrex and Porrex with disastrous results.
Ferrex (496)	<i>Gorboduc; Ferex and Porrex; 2 Seven Deadly Sins</i>	Ferrex was murdered by his brother Porrex for the throne. Porrex was subsequently murdered by their mother Videna, ending the line of Brute and triggering decades of protracted civil war.
Mulmutius Dunwallo (441)	<i>Mulmutius Dunwallo</i>	The son of Cloten, Duke of Cornwall (feat. in <i>Gorboduc</i>), Mulmutius re-united Britain following 50 years of fragmented rule and civil war.

Belinus and Brennus (401)	<i>Belynus</i> [&] <i>Brennus</i> (?); <i>Cutlack</i> (?); Brennus featured at Henry VII's entry at Bristol and appears in <i>Fuimus Troes</i> as a ghost	Mulmutius's sons divided Britain between them. They subsequently battled one another but were reconciled by their mother. The invasions of Cutlack (perhaps represented in <i>Cutlack</i>) occurred during their reigns.
Gurgunt (375)	<i>The Entertainment at Norwich</i>	Gurgunt founded Norwich, according to a tradition that post-dates the <i>Historia Regum Britanniae</i> .
Guintheleus (356)		
Cecilius (330)		
Kymarus (323)		
Elanios (321)		
Morindus (311)		
Gorbomanus (303)		
Archigallo (292; 281)	<i>No-body and Some-body</i>	Brother to Gorbomanus, Archigallo was deposed for his tyrannous rule and replaced by the elected yet unwilling Elidure.

Elidure (286; 272; 261)	<i>No-body and Some-body</i>	Elidure reconciled with his deposed brother Archigallo, who then reigned a further five years in peace.
Vigenius and Peridure (270)	<i>No-body and Some-body</i>	Elidure's younger brothers, Vigenius and Peridure deposed him and ruled together; upon their deaths, Elidure became king for the third time.
Gorbonian (258); Morgan (248); Emerianus (234); Ivall (225); Rymo (207); Geruncius (191); Catillus (173); Coilus (163); Porex (143); Chirinnus (138); Fulgen (137); Eldred (135); Androgius (134); Varianus (133); Eliud (136); Dedantius (124); Detonus (120); Gurgineus (118); Merianus (115); Bladunus (113); Capenus (111); Ovinus (108); Silius (106); Bledgabredus (104); Archemalus (94); Eldelus (92); Rodianus (88); Redargius (86); Samulius (83); Penisellus (81); Pirrhus (78); Caporus (76); Dinellus (74)		These kings correspond roughly with the “unknow[n]e regiment” addressed uneasily by Richard Harvey. Many of the reigns are short, and little information is given on these rulers' lives and reigns. As such, they proved problematic for pro-Brutan writers.

Helius (70)		
Lud (69)	<i>King Lude</i>	Lud rebuilt Troynovant and re-named it Lud's Town after himself.
Cassivellane (58)	<i>Fuimus Troes</i>	The first securely historical British figure in the Brutan histories, Brutan and Roman accounts of Cassivellane's life nevertheless differ. He defended Britain against Julius Caesar.
Theomancius (42)	<i>Fuimus Troes</i>	
Cymbeline (19)	<i>Cymbeline</i>	Cymbeline ruled at the time of the Incarnation. The accounts of his sons Arviragus and Guiderius mark a key point where Roman histories supersede the Brutan tradition.

Appendix Two: The Brutan Histories in Print, 1480-1631

This Appendix offers an overview of non-dramatic early modern printed texts engaging with Brutan history, the controversy over Brutan history, or the cultural drift away from Brutan history. Whilst manuscripts continued to be read and consulted in the early modern era, the mass-distribution power of print affords the clearest indication of how Brutan themes and notions of etiological erosion were disseminated to the widest number of readers and the people who listened to texts read aloud. Many of these texts, and their place in the historiographic schema, are discussed in greater detail in Chapter One. However, the selection is not comprehensive. Brutan figures were referenced across all literary and print genres throughout the period, in passing and habitually. Yet the texts shown here demonstrate the major shifts and trends and their chronology and clustering can be compared usefully with the print and performance rhythms of Brutan drama shown in the Introduction.

When a text was published in Latin, this is noted as an indication of that text's more limited accessibility. Later translations into the vernacular are noted as an indication of renewed interest in that text, and the concomitant extension of access to a wider readership.

The table begins with William Caxton's 1480 *The Cronycles of Englonde*, the moment at which the medieval prose *Brut* manuscript tradition enters the age of print. This also corresponds closely with the earliest Brutan drama explored in this thesis, the performance of Brutan figures in civic pageantry during Henry VII's 1486 royal progress through England.

The table concludes with the c. 1635 *True Chronologi of all the Kings of England from Brute*, a graphic broadsheet demonstrating continued interest in the Brutan histories in popular spheres well into the seventeenth century.

Historiographic work	Author; stationer	Published; London, unless otherwise stated	Notes
<i>The Cronicles of Englund</i>	Anon; William Caxton	Westminster, 1480	Print edition of the prose <i>Brut</i> with additions by Caxton.
<i>Polychronicon</i>	Anon; William Caxton	Westminster, 1480	Based on texts assembled by Ranulph Higden (d. 1364) in the fourteenth century.
<i>New Cronycles of Englande and of Fraunce</i>	Robert Fabyan; William Pynson	1516	Follows English/British history from Brute.
<i>The Pastyme of People</i>	John Rastell	1530	Rastell outlines the absence of early records relating to Brute, but begins <i>Pastyme</i> with the Trojans' arrival.
<i>A Lytell Shorte Cronycle</i>	John Lydgate	1530	Timeline of English/British rulers from "the comy[n]ge of Brute".
<i>Anglia Historia</i> (Latin)	Polydore Vergil	Basel, 1534	Vergil challenges the historicity of the Brutan histories, triggering angry responses from English writers into the 1590s.

<i>Scotorum Historiae</i> (Latin)	Hector Boece; Jodocus Badius Ascensius	Paris, 1527	Boece introduced an invented Scottish antiquity in part to counteract the English use of Brutus history to claim rulership of Scotland. His Latin text was translated into Scots by John Bellenden and published by Thomas Davidson in Edinburgh c. 1540.
<i>The Chronicle of Ihon Hardyng</i>	John Hardyng; Richard Grafton	1543	Hardyng's verse history, beginning with Brutus, was written and updated in the mid-fifteenth century to 1464.
<i>Assertio Inclytissimi Arturii Regis Britannia</i> (Latin)	John Leland; Reynold Wolfe	1544	The first print refutation of Vergil, Leland focuses on asserting the historicity of King Arthur. Translated into English in 1582.
<i>A Breve Chronycle</i>	John Bale		Bale's history of "the blessed martyr" John Oldcastle includes his attack on Vergil's interventions.
<i>The Actes of Englysh Votaryes</i>	John Bale; S. Mierdman	Antwerp, 1546	Bale includes Brutus as a historical figure and founder of Britain. Published in London in 1548 by Thomas Raynalde.

<i>A Chronycle with a Genealogie Declaryng that the Brittons and Welshemen are Linealiye Dyscended from Brute</i>	Arthur Kelton; Richard Grafton	1547	Verse history arguing, as stated in the title, for the descent of the “Brittons” and specifically the Welsh, from Brute. Contains an extended attack on the “Romains” refutation of Brute, directed to “Master Polidorus” via a marginal note.
<i>An Epitome of Chronicles</i>	Multiple authors; Thomas Berthelet	1549	Compilation of texts, later better known as <i>Cooper’s Chronicle</i> . Includes sections on Brutus antiquity by Thomas Lanquet.
<i>Ptochomuseion</i>	Multiple authors; John Day	1565	Compendium of miscellanea compiled by William Alley. Includes a section debunking Brutus history on etymological grounds, and citing comments by Thomas Eliot on the Trojans’ ignobility as further reason for rejecting them as possible ancestors. Features a section elsewhere citing Brute and his descendants as founders of London and other cities.
<i>A Summary of English Chronicles</i>	John Stow; Thomas Marshe	1565	Stow’s chronicle opens with an extended passage from Vergil on English topography. He then proceeds with British history from Brute without mention of Vergil’s scepticism.

<i>Chronicle at Large</i>	Richard Grafton	1569	The frontispiece shows portraits of Brute and his sons running parallel to Old Testament figures. The introduction by Thomas Norton, co-author of <i>Gorboduc</i> , warns against the slanders of “foreyne writers”.
<i>Commentarioli Britannicae Descriptionis Fragmentum</i>	Humphrey Llwyd; Abraham Ortelius	1572	A British chorography including a defence of Brutan history against Vergil’s refutations and Boece’s alternate Scottish account of British antiquity. Translated into English by Thomas Twyne and published in London in 1573.
<i>Historiae Brytannicae Defensio</i>	John Price; Henry Bynneman	1573	Price’s refutation of Vergil was written in the 1540s, but not published until long after his death in 1555.
<i>The First Parte of the Mirour for Magistrates</i>	John Higgins; Thomas Marshe	1574	Higgins’s companion volume to the multiple-authored <i>Mirror for Magistrates</i> (1559). Higgins extends that work’s <i>de casibus</i> tragedies to include figures of Brutan history.
<i>Chronicles</i>	Multiple authors; John Hunne	1577	Better known as “Holinshed’s chronicles,” this edition records Brutan history within its chronicle account of Britain, and in reference to the origins of British topography.

<i>The Chronicles of England from Brute</i>	John Stow; Ralph Newberie	1580	Extended and expanded work, building on Stow's <i>Summarie</i> (1565). Recounts British/English history from Brute.
<i>Rerum Scotticarum Historia</i> (Latin)	George Buchanan; Alexander Arbuthnot	Edinburgh, 1582	Buchanan's Scottish history draws upon Boece and includes an extended attack on Brutan history.
<i>Britannia</i> (Latin)	William Camden; Ralph Newbery	1586	In <i>Britannia</i> Camden is the first major English historiographical writer to outline methodically the case against Brute's historicity. His conclusion, however, is equivocal and demurs from categorical refutation. Translated into English by Philemon Holland in 1610.
<i>Albions England</i>	William Warner; Thomas Cadman	1586	Verse history of Britain beginning with euhemerised lives of classical figures including Jupiter and Hercules. Incorporates Brutan history.
<i>Historia Regum Britanniae</i> (Latin)	Geoffrey of Monmouth; Jerome Commelin	Heidelberg, 1586	The only sixteenth-century print edition of the <i>Historia</i> ; it was also widely used in England.
<i>The Light of Britayne</i>	Henry Lyte; unknown	1588	Pro-Brutan antiquarian treatise.

<i>Fennes Fruites</i>	Thomas Fenne; Richard Oliffe	1590	Treatise on numerous themes, including an argument against Brutan history founded on the Trojans' unsuitability as desirable ancestors.
<i>De Rebus Albionici</i> (Latin)	John Twyne; Richard Watkins	1590	Historiographic dialogue, including Twyne's refutation of Brutan history via its absence from classical histories.
<i>The Faerie Queene</i>	Edmund Spenser; William Ponsonby	1590	Spenser's epic verse work includes the "Briton Moniments," an account of Brutan history embedded within Spenser's larger narrative.
<i>Speculum Britanniae</i>	John Norden; unknown	1592	A chorography of Middlesex, including a brief summary of the debate regarding Brutan historicity but demurs from a categorical position.
<i>Philadelphus, or a Defense of Brutes, and the Brutans History</i>	Richard Harvey; John Wolfe	1593	Treatise arguing fiercely for Brutan history, specifically targeting Buchanan. Source of the phrase "Brutan histories".
<i>Historia Britanniae</i> (Latin)	Richard White; various	Seven parts; Arras and Douai, 1597- 1607	White's <i>Historia</i> , published in parts, argued for Brutan history. White's Catholicism challenges arguments that Brutanism necessarily indicated a Protestant position or agenda.

<i>History of England</i>	John Clapham; John Barnes	1602	Clapham begins his history from Julius Caesar's invasion, refuting Brute in a brief introduction. The introduction, and thus all mention of Brute, is removed in the 1606 edition.
<i>A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence</i>	Richard Verstegan; Robert Bruney	Antwerp, 1605	Verstegan argues for English descent from the Saxons, sidelining the ancient Britons.
<i>Of the Antient Lawes of Great Britaine</i>	George Salteren; John Jaggard	1605	Legal history. Salteren briefly outlines the Brutian controversy but settles in Brute's favour. As with many lawyers, Salteren anchors English law in laws established by Mulmutius Dunwallow.
<i>Britannica</i>	John Ross; Mathias Becker	Frankfurt, 1607	Verse account of Brutian history with an introduction discussing the Brutian controversy.
<i>Troia Britanica</i>	Thomas Heywood; William Jaggard	1609	A universal history in verse. Heywood integrates Brutian history with biblical and classical accounts of antiquity.
<i>The History of Great Britain</i>	John Speed; John Sudbury and George Humble	1611	Speed refutes Brutian history in favour of Roman accounts of ancient Britain.
<i>The Anualls of Great Brittain</i>	Robert Chester; Matthew Lownes	1611	Verse work including accounts of the lives of Brutian figures.

<i>A Brief Chronicle</i>	Anthony Munday; William Jaggard	1611	A history of Britain including Brutan elements, supported by the inclusion of Lyte's <i>Light of Britaine</i> as an appendix.
<i>The First Part of the History of England</i>	Samuel Daniel; Nicholas Oakes	1612	Daniel discounts Brutan history in a single sentence, favouring Roman accounts.
<i>Poly-Olbion</i>	Michael Drayton and John Selden; Matthew Lownes	1612	Drayton's chorographical poem draws on Brutan history and figures. Complicating this, Selden's historiographical prose annotations and marginalia are acutely sceptical.
<i>Palae-Albion</i>	William Slatyer; Richard Meighen	1621	Verse history from Brutan perspective in Latin with English translation on opposing pages. Modelled on <i>Poly-Olbion</i> .
<i>A Memorial of all the English Monarchs</i>	John Taylor; Nicholas Oakes	1622	Doggerel history from Brute to James with thumbnail portraits. 1630 edition includes paratextual note asserting "there was a BRVTE" (sig. B1r).

<i>Genathliacon</i>	William Slatyer; George Miller	1630	Graphic genealogical table tracing the Stuart line from biblical times. Priority of Brutan history is shown via the inclusion of half-body portraits of Brute and Innogen, the only figures thus pictured.
<i>Ancient Funerall Monuments</i>	John Weever; Laurence Sadler	1631	Account and description of funeral monuments from “Great Britaine, Ireland, and the islands adiacent”. Includes summary of Brutan controversy with the observation that Londoners are still the most likely to retain belief in the Brutan histories.
<i>A True Chronologi of all the Kings of England from Brute</i>	Anon	c. 1635	Broadsheet etching showing thumbnail portraits of kings from Brute to James, concluding with Prince Charles. Possible update of a Jacobean original. Reprinted as <i>A Brief Survey of all the Reigns of the Several Kings of this Isle</i> in 1674, updated once more to include Charles II.

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